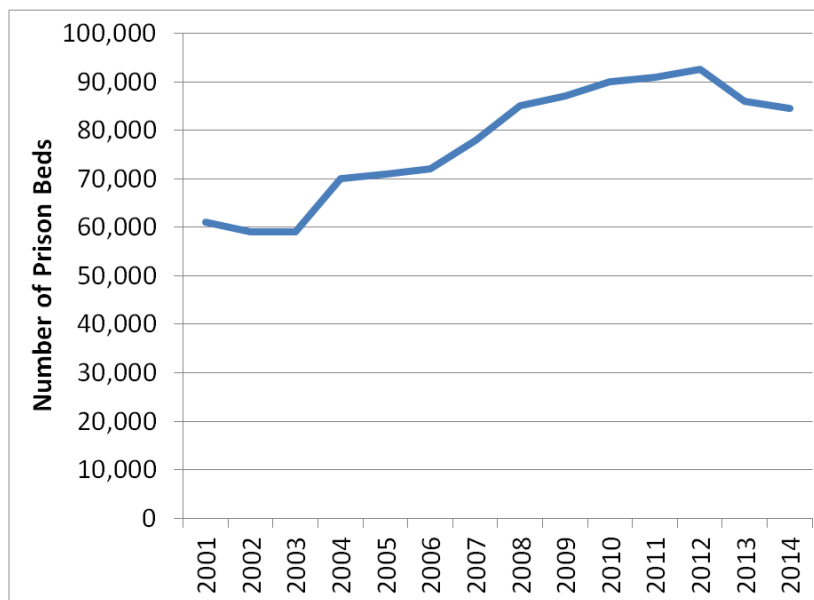


Corrections Corporation of America’s Troubling Track Record

Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) has a long history of egregious prisoner abuse and neglect. The company’s failure to follow basic regulations and standards regarding facility operations and safety has repeatedly endangered prisoners and staff alike. The first section of this issue brief provides basic information about CCA’s operations. The second section highlights information and examples that provide a glimpse of the critical problems present in many CCA-operated facilities.

CCA’s Operations

CCA is a publicly traded real estate investment trust (REIT), and the nation’s largest private prison company.¹ As of December 2014, CCA owned or controlled 52 facilities and managed an additional 12 government-owned facilities across 19 states and the District of Columbia. These facilities contained approximately 84,500 beds.² As the graph below illustrates, the number of beds across facilities that CCA has controlled has steadily increased over the past decade, with a slight dip in recent years.



CCA reports healthy profits. In 2013 and 2014, CCA collected \$300 million and \$195 million in profit, respectively,³ for a two-year total of almost \$500 million.⁴ CCA also highly compensates top company executives. CCA’s President Damon Hininger’s compensation package totaled \$3.3 million in 2013 and \$3.7 million in 2014.⁵ In 2014, CCA’s top five executives received compensation packages totaling \$10.5 million.⁶ Beyond profits and executive compensation, CCA also spends money on government lobbying efforts. In 2014, CCA spent between \$1.3 million and \$1.5 million on lobbying in nine states (California, Florida, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Vermont). In 2013, CCA spent between \$1.3 and \$1.7 million lobbying in these states.⁷ In 2013, CCA had 102 lobbyists in 26 states.⁸

CCA's Track Record

CCA facilities have been plagued with violence. Privately run prison facilities typically have more incidents of violence than their public counterparts. The Bureau of Justice Assistance found that private corrections facilities experience 65 percent more prisoner-to-prisoner assaults and 49 percent more assaults on staff than public facilities.⁹ CCA's track record regarding violence in its facilities is no exception. The following section describes shocking problems with violence in CCA-run facilities in Tennessee, Idaho, South Carolina, and Ohio.

- According to data from the Tennessee Department of Corrections, CCA's prisons in the state experience more prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, prisoner-on-staff assaults, and other incidents of violence than the state's public prisons, despite the fact that CCA mainly houses minimum- and medium-security prisoners. In 2011, 2012, and 2013, CCA's facilities recorded 16%, 23%, and 16% more violence, respectively.¹⁰
- In 2010, CCA prisoners claimed that understaffing and mismanagement made the Idaho Correctional Center so violent it was nicknamed the "Gladiator School." The rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults at the facility was four times that of the other seven prisons in Idaho combined.¹¹ The company relinquished control of the facility to gangs to save money on employee wages, severely endangering prisoners and the few correctional officers on staff.¹² CCA was later held in contempt of court in 2013 for failing to fix the staffing shortage that created these violent conditions. CCA admitted its employees had filed reports that falsely showed 4,800 hours of vacant security posts as being staffed during the night shift alone from April to October 2012.¹³
- In 2000, correctional officers at the CCA-managed Columbia Training Center in South Carolina physically abused a 14-year old boy.¹⁴ The abuse, which included macing and hog-tying, came from corporate policies of using excessive force, and many other juveniles in the facility reported similar treatment.¹⁵ A jury reached a verdict against CCA for \$3 million in punitive damages after finding that the facility had a policy or practice of abusing kids. Only a year into CCA's operation of the facility, South Carolina ended its contract with CCA, citing numerous problems and continued dissatisfaction.¹⁶
- In 2012, only a year into CCA's control of the Lake Erie facility in Ohio, state audits found staff mismanagement, widespread violence, delays in medical treatment, and "unacceptable living conditions," including a lack of access to toilet facilities. The audit also revealed that staff failed to follow proper procedures for chronically ill prisoners, medical appointments were severely delayed, and prisoners were often triple-bunked or forced to sleep on mattresses on cell floors. A shortage of qualified staff has allowed violence to plague the prison. Investigators found that between 2010 and 2012 (before and after the prison was privatized), prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased 188%, and prisoner-on-staff assaults increased 306%.¹⁷ (See graph below.) CCA's employees used unnecessary physical force and failed to sanction prisoners for misconduct.¹⁸ In addition, prisoner complaints about gangs, assaults, and other problems doubled after CCA began managing the facility. CCA has been fined over \$500,000 by the state for these violations.¹⁹



CCA facilities have high levels of sexual assault. In addition to violence, there have been numerous reports of sexual assault and violence at CCA facilities. The examples below discuss problems in facilities in Kentucky, Texas, and Arizona.

- In 2009, Hawaii removed 168 prisoners from the CCA-operated Otter Creek Correctional Center in Wheelwright, KY, after discovering that at least five facility officials had been charged with having sex with prisoners. The Kentucky Department of Corrections investigated 23 accusations of sexual assault at the Otter Creek facility between 2006 to 2009.²⁰ In addition to sexual abuse, other problems including inadequate medical care and security lapses were also prevalent at the facility.²¹
- In 2011, three immigrant prisoners at CCA’s T. Don Hutto Family Residential Center in Taylor, Texas, sued CCA for allowing a correctional officer to sexually assault them and others during transport. CCA ignored Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policy by allowing the officer to transport the women alone, without a female guard accompanying them.²²
- The CCA-run Eloy Federal Contract Facility in Arizona has the highest number of known deaths of any detention facility, including at least six suicides since 2003. Eloy is also the source of frequent reports of sexual assault, and the subject of a recent investigation initiated by Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) in June 2015.²³

CCA is medically negligent of the prisoners in its care. CCA is responsible for the medical care of prisoners in its facilities. However, the company has repeatedly failed to adequately provide appropriate care. Reduction in medical care is one way that CCA cuts corners in its operations to minimize its costs and increase profits. As the examples below show, this medical negligence can have serious consequences for the people, including children, held in the company’s facilities.

- CCA failed to provide proper medical care at Texas’s Dawson State Jail, killing numerous prisoners between 2008 and 2012, including two deaths from pneumonia that occurred because the prisoners were denied medical attention and one death that occurred from a failure to provide appropriate diabetes medication. One prisoner gave birth to a baby at

just 26 weeks when correctional officers ignored her insistence that she was pregnant. The baby died shortly afterward.²⁴ (Dawson was closed in August 2013.)²⁵

- In March 2009, an immigrant held at the Stewart Detention Center in Georgia died from a treatable heart infection when facility officials waited three days to treat him after he complained of symptoms. Additionally, numerous inmates reported rashes and lesions that developed as a result of parasites or insects in their bedding for which they had received no medical care. Georgia Detention Watch found that CCA routinely denied prisoners necessary medication and care at this facility.²⁶
- The medical staff at CCA-owned and operated South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, TX, which houses mothers and children fleeing violence seeking asylum in the U.S., prescribed drinking water for serious medical issues, including broken fingers, a dislocated shoulder, and post-surgery care.²⁷ Two hundred and fifty children were given adult doses of a Hepatitis-A vaccine in July 2015.^{28,29} Despite conditions that experts believe are psychologically damaging to resident children, this treatment continues.³⁰

¹ <https://www.cca.com/>, accessed February 17, 2016.

² <http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1070985/000119312515061839/d853180d10k.htm>, page 5

³ <http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1070985/000119312515061839/d853180d10k.htm>, page 47

⁴ <http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1070985/000119312515061839/d853180d10k.htm>, page 47

⁵ http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1070985/000119312515118064/d898931ddef14a.htm#tx898931_42, page 40

⁶ http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1070985/000119312515118064/d898931ddef14a.htm#tx898931_42, page 40

⁷ State lobbying disclosure databases.

⁸ The National Institute of Money in State Politics.

⁹ Grassroots Leadership, "Considering a Private Jail, Prison, or Detention Center? High Turnover and Unique Security Problems Created by Private Prisons," 2009.

¹⁰ Research conducted by the Human Rights Defense Center (www.humanrightsddefensecenter.org) based on public records obtained from the TN DOC.

¹¹ <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/3/7/idaho-s-largest-prison-run-by-private-corporation-is-investigated-by-fbi.html>

¹² <http://www.spokesman.com/blogs/boise/2012/nov/13/lawsuit-cca-let-gangs-take-over-idaho-prison-save-money-staffing/>

¹³ http://www.omaha.com/news/private-prison-company-cca-in-contempt-of-court/article_95d00b81-4117-5ea5-a6ed-1a250c0e6661.html and <https://www.aclu.org/blog/corrections-corporation-america-loses-four-prison-contracts-month?redirect=blog/prisoners-rights/corrections-corporation-america-loses-four-prison-contracts-month>

¹⁴ <http://www.contractormisconduct.org/misconduct/1074>

¹⁵ <http://grassrootsleadership.org/blog/2013/10/dirty-30-13-columbia-training-center-juvenile-abuse>

¹⁶ http://grassrootsleadership.org/sites/default/files/uploads/GRL_Dirty_Thirty_formatted_for_web.pdf

¹⁷ Gregory Geisler, Correctional Institution Inspection Committee, "Correctional Institution Inspection Committee Report on the Inspection and Evaluation of the Lake Erie Correctional Institution," 22-23 January 2013 (dates of inspection).

¹⁸ Ibid. According to the report, "staff... at times fail to deploy chemical agents prior to physical force, risking greater injury to both inmates and staff."

¹⁹ <http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/news/state-regional/auditors-uncover-problems-at-private-prisons-in-oh/nTgQ5/>

²⁰ http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/26/us/26kentucky.html?_r=1

²¹ <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2011/sep/15/female-prisoners-removed-from-cca-facility-in-kentucky/>

²² <https://www.aclu.org/news/documents-obtained-aclu-show-sexual-abuse-immigration-detainees-widespread-national-problem> and <http://www.courthousenews.com/2011/10/24/40857.htm>

²³ <http://immigrantjustice.org/focus-ice-inspections-eloy-federal-contract-facility-arizona>

²⁴ <http://www.texasobserver.org/death-at-dawson-why-is-texas-worst-state-jail-still-open/> and <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2014/oct/3/medical-neglect-killing-prisoners-cca-run-texas-prison/>

²⁵ <http://cityhallblog.dallasnews.com/2013/06/texas-department-of-criminal-justice-says-dawson-state-jail-on-the-shores-of-the-trinity-river-will-close-august-31.html/>

²⁶ <https://fuerzaticucson.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/corazon-cca-report.pdf>

²⁷ <http://fusion.net/story/165837/dilley-detention-center-horror-stories-from-the-medical-ward/>

²⁸ <http://www.aiala.org/advo-media/press-releases/2015/vaccine-overdose-detained-children>

²⁹ <http://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-detention-center-hepatitis-20150704-story.html>

³⁰ <http://www.aiala.org/advo-media/press-releases/2015/crcl-complaint-family-detention>