

ARIZONA DEMOCRATS OPPOSE THE FOR-PROFIT PRISON INDUSTRY

WHEREAS, the U.S. has the highest documented incarceration rate in the world. Almost 3 million adults, or 750 out of every 100,000 in our nation's population are incarcerated and another 5 million are on probation or parole; a rate 7 times the international average; and

WHEREAS, over the past four decades, the number of people incarcerated in our country quadrupled from roughly 500,000 to 2.3 million; and

WHEREAS, racial and ethnic minority Americans are disproportionately overrepresented in America's prison population: 70% of America's prisoners are non-white; and

WHEREAS, 23% of Arizona's prisoners are held in private, for-profit prisons, Arizona has the top incarceration rate in the west and is one of the top spenders on prisons, spending 11% of the budget, far above the national average of 7%; and

WHEREAS, escalating investments in incarceration over the past 30 years have undermined educational opportunities and are currently causing tremendous strain on Arizona's budget; the percentage for prisons has risen from 4.3% to 11% and the percentage for education has dropped from 19.1% to 8%; and

WHEREAS, in 10 years, our population increased 100%, yet our prison population increased 1,000% and our recidivism rates are higher than the national average, (46.7% to 40%); and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the average annual cost of incarceration in Arizona was \$48.16 per day in state prisons but \$55.30 per day in private, for-profit prisons; and

WHEREAS, private prisons are less safe; inmate-on-inmate violence is 66% higher in private prisons than in state-owned prisons and violence toward staff 49% higher in private prisons; and

WHEREAS, private prison corporations have a long record of mismanagement, abuse and corruption and are not accountable to the public but to shareholders; and

WHEREAS, private prisons have, in general, lower pay and much higher turnover among employees, jobs in the Central Arizona where the prisons are clustered pay from 26%-50% less than the national, regional and Arizona averages; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church USA, Southern Catholic Bishops and Catholic Bishops, Episcopal Diocese of Newark and NAACP have all

declared their opposition to profit making from the punishment of human beings and an abdication of our responsibility to care for our sisters and brothers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Arizona Democratic Party will strongly advocate for the abolishment of private, for-profit prisons and urge transparency and accountability for those that are in existence.

Dated:

Submitted:

Passed:

Signed: