



# Private Prisons: Cons and Pros

*Charles H. Logan*

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## **Private Prisons: Cons and Pros** Charles H. Logan

American prisons and jails are overflowing with inmates. To relieve the pressure, courts have imposed fines on overcrowded facilities and fiscally strapped governments have been forced to release numerous prisoners prematurely. In this study, noted criminologist Charles Logan makes the case for commercial operation of prisons and jails as an alternative to the government's monopoly. On philosophical, economic, legal, and practical grounds, Logan argues a compelling case for the private and commercial operation of prisons. He critically examines all objections raised by opponents, and concludes that while private prisons face many potential problems, they do so primarily because they are prisons, not because they are private. Historically, the record of private ownership and operation of corrections facilities has been bleak--ridden with political corruption, physical abuse of prisoners, and the single-minded pursuit of profits. This study demonstrates that this need not be the case. Critiquing the tendency to contrast private prisons with a hypothetical ideal, Logan instead compares them with existing public institutions, arguing that the potential problems attributed to private prisons are experienced by their public counterparts. The work examines ten sets of issues, including the propriety, cost, security, and quantity of prisons, to set out a strong case for the viability of proprietary prisons.

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