Prison Population Growth
- As of 12/31/08, the Department of Corrections (DOC) jurisdictional population was 23,144. Another 8,844 people were on parole.
- The size of Colorado's prison population has increased four-fold in the past 20 years and is expected to grow to over 27,000 people by 2013.
- However, there has been a significant slowing in the growth of the prison population in Colorado. In 2007, the prison population grew by an average of over 100 people per month. In 2008, this had slowed to 39 people a month, and is currently averaging a growth of 26 people per month.

Sources: Colorado Dept. of Corrections, "Monthly Population Report," (December 31, 2008); Annual Report, Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (Dec. 2008); FY 2009-2010 Joint Budget Committee, Staff Budget Briefing, Department of Corrections, (12/23/08)

Incarceration Rate
- Colorado's incarceration rate of 506 per 100,000 is much greater than the 50-state average (462) and the average of the Western states (458.) The incarceration rate is a calculation of the number of adults in prison per 100,000 adult state residents.
- In comparison, countries around the world have adult incarceration rates that are far lower: South Africa (344), Israel (209), Mexico (191), England and Wales (145), Australia (120), China (118), Canada (116), Germany (97), France (88), Sweden (81) and Japan (60). (need citation)

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics (http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pubalp2.htm#prisoners); Annual Report, Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (Dec. 2008)

Prison Construction
- Colorado currently operates 23 state prisons and contracts with 6 private prisons in Colorado. Currently, over 24% of all prisoners in Colorado are housed in a private prison, the 9th highest in the nation.
- A 956 bed state prison (CSPII) is under construction at a cost of over $100 million.
- A 750 bed private prison is currently under construction in Hudson, CO.
- The DOC submitted a capital construction request of over $400 million for prison expansion, not including the $100 million expansion of CSP II which is being financed using certificates of participation.

Sources: DOC Statistical Report for Fiscal Year 2007 (2008; OSPB Submissions for Unprioritized FY 2009-10 Capital Requests (August 29, 2008); Colorado Department of Corrections, Budget Hearing (January 6, 2009)

Cost of Corrections
- It costs an average of $28,759 a year to house someone in prison.
- In 1985, the DOC received $57 million from the state’s General Fund. For FY 2009/10, the DOC submitted a budget request of $825 million, an 8.3% increase ($52 million) over last year’s appropriation.
• The DOC’s current general fund budget is 57.4% higher (and $246.9 million more) than it would have been had appropriations to the DOC been limited to 6% annual compound growth since passage of the 6% limit in 1993.
• In 1985, the DOC budget was 2.8% of the state general fund budget. In 2009, it is 8.8% of the state budget.

Source: Joint Budget Committee, FY2009-10 Staff Budget Briefing, DOC (12/23/08); DOC Statistical Report FY 2007 (2008)

Women in Prison
• The US imprisons 10 times more women than Western Europe countries combined, despite similar female populations.
• 85% of women sent to Colorado’s prisons last year were convicted of a non-violent offense.
• 28% of women sent to prison in Colorado last year were convicted of a drug offense, the most prevalent crime of conviction.
• 48% of women in prison have been diagnosed as needing mental health treatment.
• 82% of women in prison have been assessed to be in need of substance abuse treatment.


Impact on Children
It is estimated that over 20,000 children in Colorado currently have a parent in prison. Studies show these children are greatly affected (academically, behaviorally, socially and financially) by the incarceration of a parent, and these children face a much higher likelihood of being incarcerated at some point in their lives.
• 70-80% of women in prison are mothers who had an average of 2.5 children under the age of 18 living with them prior to their arrest. Of these children, 85% are under the age of 10. Another 6% enter prison pregnant.
• 55% of men in prison are fathers of children under the age of 18.


Impact on Children
• 55% of people in prison (nearly 12,000 people) are past their parole eligibility date and only 13% of those that went before the Parole Board last year were granted discretionary parole.

• In 1985, the DOC budget was 2.8% of the state general fund budget. In 2009, it is 8.8% of the state budget.

Parole and Technical Violations
• Last year, 29% of all people sent to prison (3,047) in Colorado were being returned to prison for a technical violation of parole, meaning that no new crime was committed but rather a violation of a condition of supervision. Similarly, over 1,300 people on probation were revoked and sentenced to prison for a technical violation of supervision. Technical violations of parole and probation account for 41% of ALL prison admissions.
• For those released on mandatory parole in Colorado, 65% will be returned to prison within three years.
• 51% of people in prison (nearly 12,000 people) are past their parole eligibility date and only 13% of those that went before the Parole Board last year were granted discretionary parole.