

RCW 72.68.110 Contracts with private correctional entities prohibited—Exceptions. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section and RCW 72.68.010(2), the secretary is prohibited from utilizing a contract with a private correctional entity for the transfer or placement of offenders.

(2) This section does not apply to:

(a) State work release centers, juvenile residential facilities, nonprofit community-based alternative juvenile detention facilities, or nonprofit community-based alternative adult detention facilities that provide separate care or special treatment, operated in whole or in part by for-profit contractors;

(b) Contracts for ancillary services including, but not limited to, medical services, educational services, repair and maintenance contracts, behavioral health services, or other services not directly related to the ownership, management, or operation of security services in a correctional facility; or

(c) Tribal entities. [2020 c 318 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2020 c 318: "(1) The legislature finds that all people confined in prisons in Washington deserve basic health care, nutrition, and safety. As held in *United States v. California*, 921 F.3d 865, 886 (9th Cir. 2019), states possess "the general authority to ensure the health and welfare of inmates and detainees in facilities within its borders."

(2) The legislature finds that profit motives lead private prisons to cut operational costs, including the provision of food, health care, and rehabilitative services, because their primary fiduciary duty is to maximize shareholder profits. The legislature finds that this is in stark contrast to the interests of the state to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of Washingtonians.

(3) The legislature finds that people confined in for-profit prisons have experienced abuses and have been confined in dangerous and unsanitary conditions. Safety risks and abuses in private prisons at the local, state, and federal level have been consistently and repeatedly documented. The United States department of justice office of the inspector general found in 2016 that privately operated prisons "incurred more safety and security incidents per capita than comparable BOP (federal bureau of prisons) institutions." The office of inspector general additionally found that privately operated prisons had "higher rates of inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults, as well as higher rates of staff uses of force."

(4) The legislature finds that private prison operators have cut costs by reducing essential security and health care staffing. The sentencing project, a national research and advocacy organization, found in 2012 that private prison staff earn an average of five thousand dollars less than staff at publicly run facilities and receive almost sixty hours less training. The office of inspector general also found that people confined in private facilities often failed to receive necessary medical care and that one private prison went without a full-time physician for eight months.

(5) The legislature finds that private prisons are less accountable for what happens inside those facilities than state-run facilities, as they are not subject to the freedom of information act under 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552 or the Washington public records act under chapter 42.56 RCW.

(6) The legislature finds that at least twenty-two other states have stopped confining people in private for-profit facilities.

(7) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to prohibit the use of private prisons in Washington state." [2020 c 318 s 1.]

Construction—2020 c 318: "This act shall be construed liberally for the accomplishment of the purposes thereof." [2020 c 318 s 8.]

Effective date—2020 c 318: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 2, 2020]." [2020 c 318 s 9.]