

# PRISON STRIKE'S FINANCIAL IMPACT IN CALIFORNIA

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Each incarcerated worker in California generates \$41,549 annually in revenue for the prison system, or \$10,238 in profit.

**The financial losses to the California prison system are as much as \$636,068 in revenue, or \$156,736 in profit, for every day of the prison strike.**

For every day of the prison strike at the Central California Women's Facility, the prison system lost \$24,132 in revenue or \$5,946 in profit.

## QUICK FACTS

California earned \$207 million in revenue or \$58 million in profit from the labor of incarcerated workers in 2014-15.

5,588 incarcerated workers in state prisons are forced into labor in 2016.

34 state prisons operate California Prison Industry enterprises in manufacturing, services, and agriculture.

Last year, 4,848 incarcerated workers were forced to work for state prison enterprises. Each incarcerated worker generated \$12,037 in annual profit for the prison system. Yet, each worker earned only \$445.

September 9, 2016 was the start of the largest prison strike in U.S. history. Over 72,000 incarcerated workers in 22 states refused to provide their labor to profit the prison industrial complex. California forces 5,588 incarcerated workers to labor in exchange for little or no compensation.<sup>1</sup> Another 4,000 earn \$2 a day fighting Californian wildfires with inadequate training and equipment.<sup>2</sup> The prison system in California reaped \$207 million in revenue and \$58 million in profit from forced labor in 2014-15.<sup>3</sup>

Each incarcerated worker in California generates \$41,549 annually in revenue for the prison system, or \$10,238 in profit.<sup>4</sup> The financial losses to the California prison system were as much as \$636,068 in revenue, or \$156,736 in profit, for every day of the prison strike.

Prison industries are managed by the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA), which was created in 1983 based on model legislation written by the right-wing American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).<sup>5</sup> CALPIA operates manufacturing, service, and agricultural enterprises within 34 state prisons. CALPIA is restricted to selling its goods and services to state agencies—Pelican Bay State Prison has a contract with Del Norte school district to provide laundry services, for example. However, since 1990's Proposition 139 (Prison Inmate Labor Initiative) passed, private businesses can also set up shop in prisons and subcontract incarcerated workers.<sup>6</sup>

Data for incarcerated workers in private prisons<sup>7</sup> and county jails<sup>8</sup> are difficult to obtain. Prison administrators have responded to nonviolent resistance by locking down facilities, cutting off access and communication to the outside world for incarcerated workers. IWOC has ascertained that three locations went on strike, based on news reports and phone calls to prisons: Central California Women's Facility (CCWF), Merced County Jail, and Taft Correctional Institution. Approximately 212 incarcerated workers are employed in CCWF, through CALPIA.

Each incarcerated worker at CCWF generates \$113 daily in revenue for the prison system, which amounts to \$28 in profit. For every day of the prison strike at CCWF, the prison system lost \$24,132 in revenue or \$5,946 in profit.

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## ENDNOTES

1. 5,588 is an average of enrollees in career technical education from January to July 2016 based on Institution Statistics (SB601) reports for 34 facilities by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

2. Benson, T, 10/9/15, "Prisoners Conned Into Fighting Wildfires," *The Daily Beast*, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/10/10/prisoners-conned-into-fighting-wildfires.html>

3. California Prison Industry Authority Board, Annual Plan for FY 2016-2017, [http://www.calpia.ca.gov/pdf/About\\_PIA/AnnualRpt\\_2016-17.pdf](http://www.calpia.ca.gov/pdf/About_PIA/AnnualRpt_2016-17.pdf).

4. Solidarity Research Center's analysis, <http://tiny.cc/caprisonsstrike>.

5. Elk, M. and B. Sloan, 8/1/2011, "The Hidden History of ALEC and Prison Labor," *The Nation*, <https://www.thenation.com/article/hidden-history-alec-and-prison-labor/>.

6. Joint Venture Program, <http://jointventureprogram.ca.gov/aboutus/>.

7. Egelko, B, 8/29/16, "As US cuts ties with private prisons, California to keep using them," *OC Register*, <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/prisons-727282-private-state.html>.

8. Public Policy Institute of California, Aug. 2016, California's County Jails, [http://www.ppic.org/main/publication\\_show.asp?i=1061](http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_show.asp?i=1061).



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