

Frominside.com



Only The Guilty Go Quietly To The Gallows.

[Home-Menu](#)

PAMPHLETS FOR A BETTER HUMANKIND Addressing The Micro- And Macro-Problems Facing Humankind, (world events, social issues, prison reform, et. al.) And Providing Achievable Solutions; Going Where The Politically Correct Dare Not. (While the SOLUTION offered herein may not be a panacea, and may be provocative, it is offered as a positive step to correct the problem presented.)

EXORBITANT PAY AND COPIOUS EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS TO PRISON GUARDS BANKRUPTING CALIFORNIA
David Scott Harrison, (c) 2009

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation ("CDC&R") pays its guards the highest wages of any other state prison system and the Federal Bureau of Prisons ("BOP"). Decades of kowtowing governors (Deukmejian, Wilson, and Davis) gave into every wish and whim of the California Correctional and Peace Officers Association ("CCPOA"); the powerful union that represents California's prison guards. Whether those governors were simply greedy, self-serving sycophants, or a mix of both, they lavished the guards with exorbitant pay increases, indefensible pay for time-off, liberal overtime, and copious employment benefits, as well as the weakening of accountability and responsibility, and eliminating transparency. Hence ballooned the CDC&R's budget.

The State of California is in the grips of the worst budget crisis in memory, yet the CDC&R's budget continues to expand, now touching eleven billion taxpayer dollars. Governor Schwarzenegger and his fellow politicians continue to slash the budgets of K-12 education (another \$10.4-billion) and state university systems (another \$506-million), health care (several million poor senior citizens and/or disabled citizens will no longer receive vital care, plus approximately 429,000 low-income citizens will no longer be eligible for Medi-Cal benefits, thus saving billions of dollars), social services (additional cuts of nearly \$3.5-billion over the next 24-months), infrastructure, and conservation (another 4,000 conservation projects eliminated) and the environment (another \$647-million excised). And, let us not forget that California is once again set to pay its state workers, vendors, and other bills by use of vouchers, as well as issuing IOUs instead of tax refunds. The eleven billion CDC&R budget is safe, however, because it is secured and out of the reach of Schwarzenegger and his abettors. In other words, negotiations on how to remedy California's looming bankruptcy (projected deficit of forty-two billion dollars over the coming 16-months) do not include digging into the CDC&R's mountain of cash. Instead, misguided elected officials gleefully dig into other budgets for the needed moneys. The result renders our children uneducated and our young adults unprepared to compete in world job markets, our elderly and poor in pain and suffering, social services non-existent, our highways, cities and public transportation systems in collapse, and conservation a mirage and the environment less habitable by the day.

A major component of the CDC&R's budget is, of course, the pay and benefits to its guards. To get elected, Schwarzenegger promised to bust the grip the CCPOA has on the financial neck of California's taxpayers. Once elected, however, Schwarzenegger caved in totally to the CCPOA, right in line with his predecessors. Schwarzenegger points out that CCPOA members have been working without a contract since 2006. Apparently Schwarzenegger hopes the taxpayers will see that as evidence of his tough stance against the CCPOA. In fact, the guards continue to enjoy all that was gifted upon them by Deukmejian, Wilson and Davis. Schwarzenegger has done nothing, despite his campaign promises, to plug the CCPOA's siphoning hose that is deep into every state taxpayer's pocket. Even as California takes its last financial gasps, CCPOA members threaten to use the "Green Flu" and organized strikes to keep the hose open; refusing any reduction in pay, benefits, etc. The CCPOA argues that its members deserve exorbitant pay and luxurious perks because they "walk the toughest beat in California." Fiddlestick! The only thing more absurd than the CCPOA's slogan is how gullible California citizens have been to accept it. In fact, CCPOA members are not on any list of the most dangerous jobs, state or federal. The most dangerous jobs in the United States, according to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistic, 2005, are:

1. Fishers And Related Workers. Total Fatalities = 48. Rate per 100,000 workers -- 118.4;
2. Logging Workers. Total Fatalities = 80. Rate per 100,000 workers -- 92.9;
3. Aircraft Pilots And Flight Engineers. Total Fatalities = 81. Rate per 100,000 workers -- 66.9;
4. Structural Iron And Steel Workers. Total Fatalities = 35. Rate per 100,000 workers --55.6;
5. Refuse And Recyclable Collectors. Total Fatalities = 32. Rate per 100,000 workers -- 43.8;
6. Farmers And Ranchers. Total Fatalities = 341. Rate per 100,000 workers -- 41.1;
7. Electrical Power Line Repairers And Installers. Total Fatalities = 36. Rate per 100,000 workers -- 32.7;
8. Drivers/Sales And Truck Drivers. Total Fatalities = 993. Rate per 100,000 workers -- 29.1;
9. Agricultural Workers. Total Fatalities = 176. Rate per 100,000 workers -- 23.2; and
10. Construction Workers. Total Fatalities = 339. Rate per 100,000 workers -- 22.7.

So enough of the hogwash that prison guards walk the toughest beat in California. To the contrary, the workdays of CCPOA members are uneventful and prosaic. Only their self-enrichments on taxpayers' dollars ranks at the top of any list. Nonetheless, Schwarzenegger is either unwilling or clueless on how to save the taxpayers of California from the strangling grip of the CCPOA.

THE SOLUTION, in that Schwarzenegger has already declared a state of emergency as a result of California's budget crisis, is to formally dissolve the CCPOA. Schwarzenegger would then offer current prison guards a contract freezing their pay and benefits, reducing overtime, eliminating pay for time off, etc. Guards hired thereafter would be under a much different contract; pay in line with other states and the BOP, substantially reduced benefits, no pay for time off, restrictive overtime policies, etc. New employees would be held accountable and responsible for their conduct while on duty. Transparency would be put back into employment with the CDC&R. Under the new contracts, pay increases would be subject to market influences, tied to one index or another, but could never increase more than the national average for prison guards, and never more than the pay of guards in the highest paying state. The pay of current guards, however, would remain frozen until the pay of newly hired guards reach parity with the old contract guards. Old contract CCPOA members unwilling to execute their duties would be free to resign, or be subject to immediate termination from employment with the CDC&R. Guards who strike would be instantly terminated from employment with the CDC&R, and would be permanently prohibited from employment in any capacity with any State of California employer. Schwarzenegger would utilize the National Guard to keep the prisons operating until new hires could be trained and put in place. The CDC&R would immediately set in motion all procedures necessary to hire, train and place new guards to fill staffing positions to 100% percent.

The above Solution will effect a fiscally responsible long-term correction to the budget with only minimal discomfort to a few, but greatly benefitting all taxpayers of California.

If you have any questions or comments, or would like to correspond with Dave, please

[Contact Me](#)

[Home-Menu](#)

