

JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE
48th JAACL National Convention
Washington, D.C.
July 7, 2017

**A RESOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN
CITIZENS LEAGUE OPPOSING RELIANCE ON MASS INCARCERATION AND
PRIVATE-FOR-PROFIT PRISONS**

WHEREAS, mass incarceration is a term used by historians and sociologists to describe the substantial increase in the number of incarcerated people in prisons in the United States over the past forty years; and

WHEREAS, the Japanese American Citizens League has a special interest in limiting reliance on mass incarceration as a policy of first resort by virtue of the imprisonment of 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent during the Second World War and by virtue of our resulting appreciation of the burdens imposed on incarcerated individuals, families and groups; and

WHEREAS, over 2.3 million persons in the United States are presently imprisoned or jailed, with an incarceration rate of 716 people per 100,000 that is a seven fold increase in the United States rate over four decades and that is approximately seven times the current rates of comparable countries including the United Kingdom at 147, Canada at 118, Italy at 106, and France at 98 per 100,000;¹ and

WHEREAS, mass incarceration specifically targets Black and LatinX Americans of color through harsh sentencing of "quality of life" and drug related crimes, racial biases in law enforcement and the judiciary system, and in structural inequalities that groom children of color for the for-profit prison system, thereby resulting in the destruction of families and perpetuating the disenfranchisement of minority communities, and

WHEREAS, current United States prosecution practices and sentencing practices for crimes and detention policies on immigration cases have driven incarceration rates to these extraordinary levels despite a declining United States crime rate;² and

WHEREAS, private-for-profit prisons have lobbied to further increase the capacity of U.S. prisons and to impose harsher sentencing guidelines in order to stoke demand for their services; and

WHEREAS, credible independent studies and a past Deputy Attorney General of the United States have found that privately run prisons are less safe, are more expensive, and provide less adequate correctional services, programs and resources than publicly run prisons;³ and

¹ Sources of intertemporal and cross-national data on the extraordinary U.S. rates of incarceration include:

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2017.html>; and <https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/404890/prison-inherited-trait/>

² For a representative study on the causes of the high US incarceration rate, see <http://www.cbpp.org/blog/the-causes-and-costs-of-high-incarceration-rates>

³ On balance, studies support the proposition that private prisons deliver lower quality services at higher or equal cost. Some of the methodological issues that complicate analysis include taking account of differences in the composition of prison populations. For example, with private prisons seeking to exclude high cost prisoners with health problems. The links are to a variety of studies and to a

WHEREAS, the Attorney General of the United States issued an order on February 23, 2017 rescinding policies that had sought to eliminate U.S. reliance on private-for-profit prisons.⁴

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **National Council of the Japanese American Citizens League** affirms its opposition to reliance on mass incarceration and private-for-profit prisons as instruments of first resort in criminal justice and immigration policies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **National Council of the Japanese American Citizens League** calls upon the government of the United States of America to recognize that mass incarceration and private prisons are at variance with American values; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and the chairperson of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

Sponsored by: New England Chapter JACL **Dated:** May 20, 2017

Approved by: Kenneth A. Oye / Margaret Yamamoto **Title:** Co-Presidents

Signed: /s/
Kenneth A. Oye

/s/
Margaret Yamamoto

Please check one:

Fiscal Impact Statement attached
 No Fiscal Impact

summary of debates over methodology. <http://news.wisc.edu/study-finds-private-prisons-keep-inmates-longer-without-reducing-future-crime/>;
https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/open_letter_to_cca_final.pdf; https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/es_20161021_private_prisons_economics.pdf;
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2014/02/25/are-private-prisons-better-or-worse-than-public-prisons/?utm_term=.c7b781079382

⁴ Statement by Former Deputy Attorney General Yates on reducing reliance on private prisons at <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/blog/phasing-out-our-use-private-prisons>; Coverage of statement by Attorney General Sessions reversing policy on private prisons at <http://www.latimes.com/politics/washington/la-na-essential-washington-updates-justice-department-rescinds-order-1487893081-htmlstory.html>