Overview of 2026-27 Enacted Corrections Budget

Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) is a statewide coalition of more than 100 organizations working to reduce the number of people imprisoned and the number of prisons and jails in the state. We advocate for divestment from corrections and an investment in justice that centers care, not punishment. This analysis highlights key changes from the May Revise Budget.

The 2026-27 Enacted budget for Corrections totals **$19.33 billion**, a $35 million increase (0.2%) compared to the May Revise and a substantial increase of nearly **$475 million** (2.5%) since the January Proposed Budget. Most of the Corrections budget comes from State Funds; State Funding (**$18.6 billion**) for Corrections is **more than $1 billion higher than last year's Enacted Budget.** The budget allocates **$14.65 billion** (Total All Funds) **to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR),** as well as **$2.12 billion** to local community corrections, and **$929 million** to "enhancing law enforcement growth and activities." In addition to the increase in state Funding for CDCR, **funding for the Board of State and Community Corrections increased 13%** from the January Proposed budget to May Revise and **another 3%** from the May Revise until now**.**

This year's Enacted Budget includes a new chapter on "Accomplishments," touting "unprecedented investments that will benefit Californians for generations to come." CURB supports investments from this year's enacted budget that keep communities safe and resourced. However, sustaining them requires addressing California's structural deficit, which demands reducing its massive Corrections budget. Instead, recent budgets have increased spending on incarceration even as the prison population declines.

Prior prison closures and contract terminations have saved vast sums, **nearly $5 billion by 2027-28.** However, the Enacted Budget continues to push old news on prior closures and terminations, with no commitment to additional prison closures. The Administration's decision to remove prison closure in the Enacted Budget is especially disappointing given the Legislature's support for prison closure in its final joint budget package.

California must not stall additional prison closures. There are over 13,000 empty beds in state prisons. Given the substantial cuts included in the federal tax and spending bill, the state should be focused on shoring up essential services, and help pay for this by closing more prisons.

The case for a statewide prison closure plan is stronger now than it was in 2024. The Legislature included an additional prison closure in its 2026–27 budget plan, but the Governor rejected it in the Enacted Budget. CURB continues to call for at least 10 total prison closures. California needs a binding roadmap to close prisons and reinvest the savings, not CDCR's dangerous new 20-year Infrastructure Master Plan, which contemplates roughly $73 billion in prison repair and replacement costs.

It costs approximately $128,000 a year to incarcerate an average person in California prisons, and CDCR estimates this will increase to $140,000 per year in 2026-27. However, **more than 1 in 5 people in state prisons, 19,000 individuals, are 55 or older**. In 2024, incarcerated people 60+ were 14% of CDCR's adult-institution population but accounted for an estimated **27% of health system expenses**. The largest healthcare cost category among patients 70+ was specialized healthcare beds. California Correctional Health Care Services 2024 estimates show average annual **health-system costs per person** rise steeply with age—about **$87,552 (60–69)**; **$139,056 (70–79)**; and **$237,325 (80+)**—making **expanded release pathways for elders and medically vulnerable people** currently receiving inadequate and fragmented medical care a **humane, direct cost-reduction strategy**. Health care programs account for about **$4.2 billion** of CDCR's $14.6 billion budget, or roughly 29%.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS: According to the Three Judge Court Quarterly Update, CDCR facilities are operating at "119%" of their design capacity. CDCR has manipulated its capacity calculation to now include space for programming, healthcare, and services—not just beds—resulting in **inflated overcrowding figures** even as the population declines.

Spring projections estimate **the average daily adult incarcerated population at 90,126 in FY 2025–26 and 87,611 in FY 2026–27**. Even accounting for Proposition 36, the Governor's own forecast shows a continued decline in the number of incarcerated adults to **85,210** by June 30, 2030. Notably, California's recidivism rate has been improving for years and that progress predates the California Model by roughly a decade.California can safely close additional prisons without overcrowding the remaining facilities.

The average daily parole population is also projected to continue **declining from 33,785 in 2025–26** to **31,028** through **June 30, 2030**.

THE GOOD: The Enacted Budget maintains some positives that advocates and community members fought for and that were announced in last year's budget:

- **Maintaining Plan to Close 4th Prison by October:** Last year, in direct response to sustained advocacy by communities and impacted people, the Governor announced plans to close the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC) by October 2026, with projected annual savings of **$150 million**. As of July 29th, 2026, CRC has officially been emptied. Our communities must continue to monitor the closure process and ensure the prison is fully decommissioned. CURB has also called for investing savings from closure into economic development initiatives and social services in communities most in need and pursuing community-informed repurposing opportunities for the site.
- **Slight Increase in Funding for Community-Based Organizations**: The Enacted Budget includes **$37.6 million** to support community-based organizations that provide in-prison programming, including $20 million one-time for Rehabilitative Investment Grants for Healing and Transportation (RIGHT) and $5 million ongoing for the Hope and Redemption Team (HART) program. It also includes some one-time funding for the Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition ($6 million) and the Home After Harm program ($5.5 million). Most people incarcerated in California prisons will return home one day, and these investments will advance long-term solutions that support successful reentry and create safer communities throughout California.

THE BAD: CDCR's infrastructure includes more than **40 million** square feet of buildings on more than **20,000** acres of land statewide. The budget proposes no additional full prison closures, even as CDCR projects the adult prison population will keep declining.

- **Ongoing Failure to Meet Savings Targets:** CDCR and the Administration continue to promise major operational savings, only to revise those promises downward when it is time to deliver. In January, the Governor's Budget assumed **$250 million** in 2026-27 CDCR operational savings tied to the state's controversial **$20 million** Boston Consulting Group contract. By the Enacted Budget, the Administration had identified **only $43 million** in net 2026-27 General Fund savings from that work, reducing the assumed savings by roughly **$207 million** in a single budget cycle. The remaining savings plan is still flimsy: the Administration says BCG identified savings through workforce "optimization," workers' compensation changes, “contract efficiencies,”and staff cuts. But the budget does not clearly explain which positions will be eliminated, why those changes are appropriate, or how they will affect service levels. The Enacted Budget also assumes another **$100 million** in ongoing General Fund savings beginning in 2027-28 from additional areas that CDCR and Finance are still evaluating, as well as an unallocated **$150 million** reduction to CDCR’s budget. That is not a concrete savings plan; it is another placeholder from a department that has repeatedly failed to deliver the savings it promised.

- **Millions Wasted on a Prison identified as a Strong Candidate for Closure:** The Enacted budget also includes **$1.1 million** for preliminary plans on new groundwater wells at the **Correctional Training Facility (CTF) in Soledad** and **$10 million** to install Audio-Video Surveillance Systems at CTF and California Men's Colony. The **LAO previously recommended rejecting the CTF proposals because CTF is a "strong candidate for closure"**—it lacks modern housing, doesn't provide specialized health care, isn't designated for higher mental health care, and faces **$296 million** in kitchen replacements and **$83 million** in fire alarm replacements over the next decade.
- **Prop 36 Costs California:** Annual Prop. 47 savings are projected to fall from $91.5 million in 2025–26 to **$89.1 million** in 2026–27, and **$77.3 million** in 2027–28, a nearly 16% decline. That means tens of millions of dollars that should support treatment, diversion, youth programs, and survivor services are being pulled back toward incarceration.
- **6,000 More Positions than Two Years Ago:** Despite three recent prison closures and a planned fourth, CDCR has added nearly 6,000 positions since 2024-25. In January 2026-27, CDCR was budgeted for [58,053 positions](). The May Revision then added new staffing for several proposals, including Corcoran honor housing and workers’ compensation administration. That amounts to roughly **two CDCR positions for every three people projected to be incarcerated.**
- **Reduction to Rehabilitative Programs:** Between January and May, the administration quietly moved roughly **$4 million** out of the Rehabilitative Programs (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Reentry Services and Adult Education program lines). Framed as a "technical adjustment," the practical effect is to shrink CDCR's rehabilitative programming, moving more money into operations.

THE UGLY: The Budget continues to prioritize other carceral spending while our state’s most vulnerable residents suffer. Oftentimes, initiatives look positive but obscure irresponsible spending.

- **Expansion at California State Prison, Corcoran (CSP-COR):** The Enacted budget enshrines CSP-COR expansion proposed in May, adding **$9.7 million** General

Fund and **49 positions** in 2026-27, growing to **$12.6 million** and **65 positions** ongoing, to reactivate Corcoran 3C as a Level III "honor housing" unit. CURB supports demands led by currently incarcerated people to improve daily conditions, reduce violence and expand community-led programming. But CDCR is using those goals to justify reactivating prison space, adding staff, and preserving institutional capacity. The proposal produces only a **75-bed** net reduction systemwide and creates ongoing costs beginning in 2027-28. Without a binding closure and release plan, the California Model risks becoming another rationale for keeping prisons open, rather than a pathway to decarceration and reinvestment.

- **Additional $100 Million for Workers' Compensation:** CDCR continues to understate the true cost of its workforce. In January, the Administration requested **$90 million** ongoing to pay out accrued leave balances for departing employees, costs that should already be reflected in the budgeted cost of maintaining CDCR's staffing levels. The May Revision compounded the credibility problem by requesting an additional **$100 million** General Fund for increased workers' compensation costs. The Enacted Budget approved this expense, noting that workers' compensation costs are a "major baseline cost pressure for the department," a cost that is obscured, underestimated in the budget, and tied to CDCR's oversized workforce.
- **Incarcerated Menopause Program:** The Enacted Budget approved **$1.1 million** one-time General Fund spending in 2026-27 to improve access to menopause education and clinical care for aging incarcerated women. That care is absolutely necessary. But it is also a revealingly small response to a much larger crisis. Menopause care cannot become another way to manage people through old age inside prison. It should underscore the need for elder release, medical release, survivor support, and prison closure.

For a full summary of the State Budget visit https://ebudget.ca.gov.

For more information on CURB's work and advocacy, read The Prison Closure Roadmap, visit www.curbprisonspending.org, or email info@curbprisonspending.org.

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