# prison reform plan

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### Stacy George for Governor Prison Reform Plan

Stacy George ROCK SOLID PRISON REFORM

**BACKGROUND:** I come to you as a former two-term Morgan County Commissioner who has been a party to building a 23-million-dollar Jail while under a Federal Court Order. I was there from the design stage to the staffing stage of the new jail. I come to you as an 8-year Correctional Officer at the largest prison in the state known as Limestone Correctional Facility and St. Clair Correctional Facility that is one of the most dangerous facilities in the nation. I come to you as a Notary Public for the State of Alabama who notarized nearly 1200 court documents in one year in the prison system; I have been a Notary Public for about 6 years, and I have a deep understanding of the criminal justice system in Alabama from the ground level.

**PROPOSAL:** I estimate if you act on all these proposals, you will drop the total inmate population by approximately 5,000 inmates in one year. I would love to sell you a dream and say multiply 5,000 inmates by $18,000/yr. per inmate and get a $90,000,000 savings per year, but after you factor in the security cost the savings is more like $30,000,000. If you choose to add the new prison as a new facility this cost savings would be washed out.

Debate slow release issues in open debate next session.

1. Be it enacted moving IGT (Incentive Good Time) from the current 15 years to 20 years; include Class A Felonies in this adjustment.
2. Be it enacted ending the Split Sentence option for Judges.
3. Be it enacted repeal and replace the 446 ACT (Habitual Offender)-Currently any 3 Felonies is applied; this should be changed to 3 Felonies of the same crime like Texas. Nobody is tougher on crime than Texas.
4. Be it enacted inmate medical expenses outside of the prison should be tracked and the minute the inmate accumulates $50,000 a flag should go off. Next, the inmate should automatically be brought up for parole CONSIDERATION by the Parole Board.
5. Be it enacted that we use a combination of the lethal injection/ electric chair at the same time to make sure the death penalty is quick and humane. (I have a civil rights attorney researching this as we speak.) This must be in place before we can do #6.
6. Be it enacted ending the LWOP (Life without Parole) option. You get Life or the Death Penalty; the Death Penalty appeal process should be mandated to Judges to be heard immediately to speed this appeal process up. Anything to speed this up within the law is recommended. (LWOP) inmates could live as long as 50 years or more costing $800,000 to $1,000,000 dollars in a lifetime. These inmates have no incentive to have good behavior; they have nothing to lose at all. A person with nothing to lose is a dangerous thing.
7. Create a method to be resentenced under the Truth in Sentencing point system. This would be like the Kirby Act; the problem in Alabama is you have inmates sentenced under the 446 Act and the old law. Under the current point system thousands of inmates would already be released like the people being sentenced daily under the point system used today. We also have a new Class D Felony created a couple of years ago by SB 67 that did not exist

INITIATE Number 8 now.

1. I understand the concept of saving money by the staffing, maintenance, energy efficiencies, etc. I also understand as a county commissioner being a part of the design stage to the staffing stage of a new 23-million-dollar jail. Dealing with jails and prisons you need more people than the computer-generated analysis. I would suggest if you must try this concept to see if it saves money; build one prison in the Montgomery area consolidating Draper, Staton, and Elmore. This would not change the census for the county in a negative way. This would not displace correctional staffing. This would be honest with the people and explain where the prison is going. This would allow close observation by the legislature. I would competitively bid it out and revamp a new women’s prison using the largest existing men’s prison of the group. For the new prison for men, I would add 1000 beds in addition to the actual number of inmates being housed. This would take about two years to build if it is competitively bid; I would also competitively bid the bonding authority as well. In the next legislative session or a special session, I would openly debate the slow release of certain inmates as described in my “ROCK SOLID PRISON PLAN”. If it is determined that upon completion of this state-of-the-art facility using less officers is what we want to do then we consolidate the three prisons and move on. If it is determined the people of Alabama do not want to have a slow release of inmates, then simply staff this new prison and open this as a new one. This would likely put us within the capacity level we are shooting for. This would show the Justice Department we are working to fix our overcrowding issue in Alabama prisons. I WOULD NOT ALLOW ANY COMMITTEE TO DO ANY FUTURE EXPENDITURE UNTIL DATA IS PROVIDED OF THE SAVINGS. This plan makes good common sense. I have used the staffing levels on the ADOC website to determine staffing levels by percentage. You can use the actual inmates housed to determine the actual size of the prison plus 1000 beds.
2. SB 67 that passed a couple of years ago created a Class D Felony setting up a new process. The Dip/Dunk is a 45-day/90-day restart program. This has lowered the inmate population by nearly 3,000 inmates in the last several years. Now, we have inmates currently in the prison system that are doing time for less than what these Class D Felony inmates have done. This should be addressed in the prior paragraph addressing existing inmates.
3. Be it enacted the Truth in Sentencing Point System is now firm; Judges must use the point system that a group of Judges agreed upon. This point system started in 2003; it was changed in 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2013. Currently, a Judge is required to insert into the transcript if they do not use the point system giving a reason why they did not use it. WE MUST STOP SOME JUDGES FROM PLAYING GOD GIVING LONG SENTENCES TO THE POOR AND GIVING SHORT SENTENCES, IF ANY, TO THE RICH.
4. Be it enacted that no inmate will be paroled from an Alabama prison or be denied parole from an Alabama prison without speaking directly to the Parole Board Members face to face via camera with audio or in person. The Parole Board will be given at least 15 minutes to ask questions and the inmate will be given at least 15 minutes to make his case for parole. There is a minimum time of 30 minutes of dialogue required, but there is no limit for using more time. ALABAMA IS THE ONLY STATE IN THE UNITED STATES I HAVE FOUND THAT RELEASES AND REJECTS INMATES FOR PAROLE WITHOUT BOARD MEMBERS ACTUALLY COMMUNICATING DIRECTLY WITH THE INMATE. Protestors are present at the hearing and usually the inmate’s direct family, but without face-to-face communication the process is flawed. A picture is worth a thousand words.
5. The Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles is currently a 3-member board; we need to expand this board to a two-board system with an additional three-member board. This makes sense; Governor Riley initiated this as Governor for a few years; the number of Parole Officers has been increased and this makes good common sense. This is nothing new.
6. Be it enacted that no Alabama Law Enforcement Officer under the umbrella of ALEA (Alabama Law Enforcement Agency) or any other APOST certified individual in Alabama will be allowed to serve in this capacity UNTIL they have first served 3 years as a Correctional Officer in the Department of Corrections. This is not a new concept; most Sheriffs in this state pick from their jail staff to promote to road deputies. Correctional Officers in Alabama are APOSTc certified with a 40 caliber Glock pistol and a 12-gauge shotgun. This will not only quickly achieve safe Correctional Officer levels in the prison, but it will create a better Law Enforcement Officer on the street. A person must know who they are locking up before they start locking people up. In the prison you are always outnumbered and behind the fence you do not have a Glock pistol or a shotgun. You are trained with great communication skills. This 3 years of experience as a Correctional Officer would help law enforcement on the street make a better judgment decision dealing with the use of a weapon. This would not necessarily create a shortage in agencies; they would be able to pick from a pool of Correctional Officers who have been tried and tested for at least 3 years. The Department of Corrections is doing a great job of weeding out corrupt officers in the DOC over the last few years. In the 1980s Correctional Officers and State Troopers made the same pay, but not TODAY.
7. The original bill was SB 59 and it fits DOC well because the average LIFE EXPECTANCY of a Correctional Officer is 59. In the past few years our state retirement has been changed to a higher number of years before retirement as well as a later date to draw your retirement. I have attached a copy of my W2 form; there seems to be some strange numbers in Montgomery floating around about what an officer makes per year. This should BUST all false numbers. My salary reflects two days’ overtime, so my salary reflects an officer of 8 years at DOC with our merit raises frozen for 6 years and no cost of living raises at all. I am fine with my salary I love my job, but obviously others are finding better employment opportunities other places. Currently, according to numbers found publicly Bibb Correctional Facility is at 32% staffing and Ventress Correctional Facility is at 36.6% staffing. Prisons have been overcrowded for years, but according to reports the violence is worse. When you cannot recruit and retain officers you put everyone in a dangerous situation. The pay is the main problem not the buildings we work in; I know this because I am on the ground working there. I know of no other state agency with low numbers of employment except for Parole Officers who the legislature allowed additional hiring in the recent past. This shortage of officers started back in the early 2000’s with the shutting down of the farm days at Limestone Correctional Facility; inmates need to do hard labor jobs while in prison so they will not want to come back. Low officer numbers hinder work details.
8. North Carolina implemented the YOP (Youthful Offender Program) in 1998; this offered 36 college courses to 18-25-year-old inmates. Within nine years the recidivism rate dropped from 49% to 19% for those who participated in the YOP program. The program was deemed so successful that it was expanded to include 18-35-year-old inmates and it was renamed the incarcerated individuals Program. (Allison Anders)
9. Be it enacted an education sentence of a two-year trade administered by a local two-year college and a GED is required. Upon completion you will be sent to a work release program for 1 year preferably in the field of your acquired skill. The reason the work release is important is simply having the money to live without going back to the environment that put you there. At the completion of this process, you will be hereby released from prison considered the end of your sentence. If you are not capable or willing to complete this trade or GED, you will complete a sentence of 5 years in an Alabama prison. Currently, we have Calhoun Community College partnered with Limestone prison; they offer welding, horticulture, construction, brick masonry, ABE, and drafting. They also offer an opportunity to get a GED.
10. Currently, if this is your first trip to prison, on your departure you receive $10.00 and a bus ticket back to the county your crime was committed.

We can do better than this in Alabama and we must do better than this in Alabama.

When I think of youth, I think of our mentally challenged in Alabama; they have the mind of a child. In Alabama we shut the Mental Health Facilities down and the mentally challenged have several options. They end up with their family if they can afford it, under a bridge if they can find it, in a jail, or in an Alabama prison. WE PUT OUR MOST DANGEROUS AND DEFENSELESS IN THE SAME PLACE. This makes an Alabama prison dangerous for officers and inmates.

Wake up Alabama,

Stacy Lee George

Correctional Officer

Candidate for Governor of Alabama