



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Presbyterians challenge nationwide prison privatization: faith leaders coordinate letter delivery to 48 governors.

On Thursday, March 1, 2012 the Presbyterian Criminal Justice Network will challenge governors in 48 states to reject a "corrections investment initiative" from Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) to purchase state-owned correctional facilities, which would require states to enter into minimum 20-year contracts with CCA and guarantee a 90% prisoner occupancy rate.

Pointing out the disincentive for private prisons to support criminal justice reform and rehabilitate prisoners, the Network cited a 2003 resolution approved by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to abolish the private prison industry: *"there are some things that can never be for sale, even and especially when they involve 'one of the least of these followers of mine.'"*

Letters are being faxed and emailed to the governors who received CCA's offer, and are being hand-delivered to the governors' offices in a dozen states: Arizona, Georgia, Hawaii, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas.

PHEWA Executive Director Rev. Trina Zelle stated: "We believe that privatizing prisons, and thereby incarcerating people for the purpose of generating corporate profit, is immoral and contrary to the faith teachings of the Presbyterian Church. Through this letter we urge the governors to reject the notion that justice is for sale to the lowest corporate bidder."

The Presbyterian Criminal Justice Network is a ministry of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA). PHEWA itself is a ministry of the Compassion, Peace and Justice ministry area of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and was established in 1956 to interpret and implement denominational mandates. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has 2 million members nationwide.

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