Since 2007-08, Spending Per State Prisoner Has Increased More Than Twice as Fast as Spending Per K-12 Student

Inflation-Adjusted Per Capita Expenditures

- **Spending per prisoner has outpaced spending per K-12 student.** Under Governor Brown’s proposed 2018-19 budget, spending per prisoner would exceed $80,000 – up by 32% since 2007-08, after adjusting for inflation. Spending per K-12 student would be 14% above the 2007-08 level.

- **Spending per prisoner is rising because California’s correctional infrastructure has not shrunk even as the prison population declines.** Several reforms have reduced the number of people held in state prisons from 154,483 in 2007-08 to a projected 118,819 in 2018-19. Yet, due to ongoing overcrowding, California has not been able to close any prisons, and staffing levels remain high. As a result, the cost per prisoner has gone up.

- **Downsizing the state prison system would require further criminal justice reforms.** This would free up state funds that could be used to strengthen families, reduce poverty, and boost support for K-12 schools, rehabilitation, and other key services.

* 2017-18 estimated and 2018-19 proposed.

Note: The “state prisoner” category includes a relatively small number of individuals housed in state fire camps. Proposition 98 spending includes both state General Fund and local property tax dollars.

Source: Department of Finance and Legislative Analyst’s Office

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