

## HILLARY CLINTON ON PRISON REFORM

PRESIDENT CLINTON AND HILLARY CLINTON HAVE BEEN TOUGH ON CRIME

**IN A COLUMN FOR SALON, JEFF STEIN ARGUED THAT PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON, WITH THE SUPPORT OF HILLARY, HELPED CREATE THE “WORLD’S LARGEST PRISON SYSTEM”**

**HEADLINE: “The Clinton Dynasty’s Horrific Legacy: How ‘Tough-On-Crime’ Politics Built The World’s Largest Prison System.”** [Jeff Stein, Salon, [4/13/15](#)]

**Salon’s Jeff Stein: “Before Liberals Enthusiastically Sign Up For Team Hillary, They Should Remember This: In The Late 1990s, Bill Clinton Played In Instrumental Role In Creating The World’s Largest Prison System...And He Did It With His Wife’s Support.”** “Hillary Clinton wants to run for president as an economic populist, as a humane progressive interested in bolstering the fortunes of poor and middle class Americans. But before liberals enthusiastically sign up for Team Hillary, they should remember this: In the late 1990s, Bill Clinton played in instrumental role in creating the world’s largest prison system — one that has devastated our inner cities, made a mockery of American idealism abroad, and continues to inflict needless suffering on millions of people. And he did it with his wife’s support.” [Jeff Stein, Salon, [4/13/15](#)]

**Salon’s Jeff Stein: “The Explosion Of The Prison System Under Bill Clinton’s Version Of The ‘War On Drugs’ Is Impossible To Dispute. The Total Prison Population Rose By 673,000 People Under Clinton’s Tenure — Or By 235,000 More Than It Did Under President Ronald Reagan.”** “The explosion of the prison system under Bill Clinton’s version of the ‘War on Drugs’ is impossible to dispute. The total prison population rose by 673,000 people under Clinton’s tenure — or by 235,000 more than it did under President Ronald Reagan, according to a study by the Justice Policy Institute. ‘Under President Bill Clinton, the number of prisoners under federal jurisdiction doubled, and grew more than it did under the previous 12-years of Republican rule, combined,’ states the JPI report (italics theirs). The federal incarceration rate in 1999, the last year of the Democrat’s term, was 42 per 100,000 — more than double the federal incarceration rate at the end of President Reagan’s term (17 per 100,000), and 61 percent higher than at the end of President George Bush’s term (25 per 100,000), according to JPI.” [Jeff Stein, Salon, [4/13/15](#)]

**Salon’s Jeff Stein: While Running For President, Bill Clinton Emphasized Criminal Justice And Right Before The New Hampshire Primary He “Famously Flew Back To Arkansas To Personally Oversee The Execution Of A Mentally Impaired African-American Inmate Named Ricky Ray Rector.”** “Just before the New Hampshire primary, Bill Clinton famously flew back to Arkansas to personally oversee the execution of a mentally impaired African-American inmate named Ricky Ray Rector. The ‘New Democrat’ spoke on the campaign trail of being tougher on criminals than Republicans; and the symbolism of the Rector execution was followed by a series of Clinton ‘tough on crime’ measures, including: a \$30 billion crime bill that created dozens of new federal capital crimes; new life-sentence rules for some three-time offenders; mandatory minimums for crack and crack cocaine possession; billions of dollars in funding for prisons; extra funding for states that severely punished convicts; limited judges’ discretion in determining criminal sentences; and so on. There is very strong evidence that these policies had a small impact on actual crime rates, totally out of proportion to their severity.” [Jeff Stein, Salon, [4/13/15](#)]

**Salon’s Jeff Stein: Clinton Backed A Series Of “Tough On Crime” Measures, And “There Is Very Strong Evidence That These Policies Had A Small Impact On Actual Crime Rates, Totally Out Of Proportion To Their Severity.”** “The ‘New Democrat’ spoke on the campaign trail of being tougher on criminals than Republicans; and the symbolism of the Rector execution was followed by a series of Clinton ‘tough on crime’ measures, including: a \$30 billion crime bill that created dozens of new federal capital crimes; new life-sentence rules for some three-time offenders; mandatory minimums for crack and crack cocaine possession; billions of dollars in funding for prisons; extra funding for states that severely punished convicts; limited judges’ discretion in determining criminal sentences; and so on. There is very

strong evidence that these policies had a small impact on actual crime rates, totally out of proportion to their severity.” [Jeff Stein, Salon, [4/13/15](#)]

**Salon’s Jeff Stein: There Was “Very Strong Evidence” That Bill Clinton’s Crime “Policies Contributed To The Immiseration Of Vast Numbers Of Black (And Also White) Americans At The Bottom Of The Economic Ladder.”** “The ‘New Democrat’ spoke on the campaign trail of being tougher on criminals than Republicans; and the symbolism of the Rector execution was followed by a series of Clinton ‘tough on crime’ measures, including: a \$30 billion crime bill that created dozens of new federal capital crimes; new life-sentence rules for some three-time offenders; mandatory minimums for crack and crack cocaine possession; billions of dollars in funding for prisons; extra funding for states that severely punished convicts; limited judges’ discretion in determining criminal sentences; and so on.... There is also very strong evidence that these policies contributed to the immiseration of vast numbers of black (and also white) Americans at the bottom of the economic ladder, according to the well-known conclusions of journalists, academics and other criminal justice experts.” [Jeff Stein, Salon, [4/13/15](#)]

**President Clinton Permanently Banned Anyone Convicted Of A Felony Drug Offense From Being Eligible For Food Stamps Or Welfare.** “Clinton put a permanent eligibility ban for welfare or food stamps on anyone convicted of a felony drug offense (including marijuana possession). He prohibited drug felons from public housing. Any liberal arts grad with an HBO account can tell you the consequences for poor, black American cities like Baltimore. As Alexander writes, ‘More than any other president, [Clinton] created the current racial undercaste.’” [Jeff Stein, Salon, [4/13/15](#)]

**...JEFF STEIN ARGUED THAT WHILE PRESIDENT CLINTON WAS “ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE” FOR THE POLICIES, HILLARY WAS A “FAMOUSLY INVOLVED FIRST LADY ON POLITICAL MATTERS” AND PLANNED TO POINT TO THE 1990s IN HER PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN**

**Salon’s Jeff Stein Argued That While President Clinton Was “Ultimately Responsible” For The Policies, Hillary Was A “Famously Involved First Lady On Political Matters” And Planned To Point To The 1990s In Her Presidential Campaign.** “While it’s true that it was Bill who, as president, was ultimately responsible for these decision, Hillary was nonetheless a famously involved First Lady on political matters — a reputation she’s shown willingness to capitalize on in her new campaign. According to a 2013 Wall Street Journal report, Hillary has ‘signaled she would use the 1990s as a selling point if she jumps in the race, making the case that, as first lady, she was part of an era that found solutions to the same sorts of political difficulties that bedevil present-day Washington.’ That legacy includes Bill Clinton’s ‘War on Drugs,’ whether you like it or not.” [Jeff Stein, Salon, [4/13/15](#)]

**IN 1994, HILLARY CLINTON ADVOCATED FOR TOUGHER PRISON SENTENCES AND A THREE STRIKES YOU’RE OUT POLICY**

**Reason Reported That In 1994, Hillary Clinton Said: “We Need More Police, We Need More And Tougher Prison Sentences For Repeat Offenders. The Three Strikes And You’re Out For Violent Offenders Has To Be Part Of The Plan.”** “We need more police, we need more and tougher prison sentences for repeat offenders. The three strikes and you’re out for violent offenders has to be part of the plan. We need more prisons to keep violent offenders for as long as it takes to keep them off the streets.” [Reason, [12/5/14](#)]

**AS FIRST LADY, HILLARY LOBBIED FOR PRESIDENT CLINTON’S CRIME BILL...**

**Reason: As First Lady, Hillary Clinton “Lobbied For Her Husband’s Crime Bill,” And In Recent Years Has Taken Stands In Favor Of Stricter Punishment For Hate And Sex Crimes.** “As First Lady, Clinton lobbied for her husband’s crime bill, which (among other things) encouraged states to enact harsher sentencing statutes and expanded the list of crimes subject to the federal death penalty. In 2001, Clinton co-sponsored a bill to provide more funding and stricter sentencing for hate crimes. In her 2006 book It Takes a Village, Clinton praised stricter punishments for people charged with sex crimes.” [Reason, [12/5/14](#)]

**...BUT IN 2007, HILLARY CLINTON ADMITTED THAT BECAUSE OF PRESIDENT CLINTON'S CRIME BILL, THERE HAS "BEEN AN UNACCEPTABLE INCREASE IN INCARCERATION ACROSS THE BOARD" AND "WE'VE GOT TO TAKE STOCK NOW OF THE CONSEQUENCES"**

**In 2007, When Asked About President Clinton's Crime Bill, Hillary Clinton Said "The Results...Have Been An Unacceptable Increase In Incarceration Across The Board" And "We've Got To Take Stock Now Of The Consequences."** "Q: Some people say your husband's crime bill is one of the primary factors behind the rising incarceration rate for blacks and Latinos. It earmarked \$8 billion dollars for prisons and continued a trend to harsher sentencing. Do you regret how this has affected the black community? A: I think that the results--not only at the federal level but at the state level--have been an unacceptable increase in incarceration across the board & now we have to address that. At the time, there were reasons why the Congress wanted to push through a certain set of penalties and increase prison construction and there was a lot of support for that across a lot of communities. It's hard to remember now but the crime rate in the early 1990s was very high. But we've got to take stock now of the consequences, so that's why I want to have a thorough review of all of the penalties, of all the kinds of sentencing, and more importantly start having more diversion and having more second chance programs." [ 2007 Iowa Brown & Black Presidential Forum, On The Issues, [12/1/07](#)]

**AS A SENATOR, HILLARY CLINTON SUPPORTED THE COPS PROGRAM, A POLICE FUNDING INITIATIVE**

**Clinton Voted To Reinstate \$1.15 Billion For The COPS Program, Which Is A Police Funding Initiative, And Co-Sponsored The COPS Improvements Act Of 2007.** "In 2007, she voted to reinstate \$1.15 billion in funding for the COPS Program, a police funding initiative launched by the crime bill. Clinton also co-sponsored the COPS Improvements Act of 2007, which amended existing grants for community policing programs to hire more officers on anti-terror and homeland security duties, hire more school-based police officers, and create 'school-based partnerships between local law enforcement agencies and local school systems to combat crime, gangs, drug activities, and other problems facing elementary and secondary schools'. (We've seen how well that last bit works out.)" [Reason, [12/5/14](#)]

**IN RECENT YEARS HILLARY CLINTON HAS TAKEN STANDS IN FAVOR OF STRICTER PUNISHMENT FOR HATE AND SEX CRIMES**

**Reason: In Recent Years Hillary Clinton Has Taken Stands In Favor Of Stricter Punishment For Hate And Sex Crimes.** "As First Lady, Clinton lobbied for her husband's crime bill, which (among other things) encouraged states to enact harsher sentencing statutes and expanded the list of crimes subject to the federal death penalty. In 2001, Clinton co-sponsored a bill to provide more funding and stricter sentencing for hate crimes. In her 2006 book *It Takes a Village*, Clinton praised stricter punishments for people charged with sex crimes." [Reason, [12/5/14](#)]

**IN RESPONSE TO FERGUSON, HILLARY CLINTON ARGUED WE MUST GRAPPLE WITH "HARD TRUTHS" ABOUT DISCRIMINATION AND THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND "COME TOGETHER"**

**Hillary Clinton Said Of Ferguson: "I Personally Hope That These Tragedies Give Us The Opportunity To Come Together As A Nation To Find Our Balance Again."** "The United States has less than 5% of the world's population, yet we have almost 25% of the world's total prison population,' she said, saying it's not because Americans break more laws than other nations. 'It is because we have allowed our criminal justice system to get out of balance. And I personally hope that these tragedies give us the opportunity to come together as a nation to find our balance again.'" [MSNBC, [12/4/14](#)]

**Hillary Clinton Noted That The US Houses Almost 25% Of The World's Prison Population And Said "We Have Allowed Our Criminal Justice System To Get Out Of Balance."** "The United States has less than 5% of the world's population, yet we have almost 25% of the world's total prison population,' she said, saying it's not because Americans break more laws than other nations. 'It is because we have allowed our criminal justice system to get out of balance. And I personally hope that these tragedies give us the opportunity to come together as a nation to find our balance again.'" [MSNBC, [12/4/14](#)]

**MSNBC: “In Her Strongest Comments Yet This Year On Criminal Justice, Hillary Clinton Called For Grappling With ‘Hard Truths’ About Racial Discrimination In The Justice System, And Said ‘Weapons Of War’ Have No Place On The Streets Of American Communities.”** “In her strongest comments yet this year on criminal justice, Hillary Clinton called for grappling with ‘hard truths’ about racial discrimination in the justice system, and said ‘weapons of war’ have no place on the streets of American communities. Before beginning her speech at the Massachusetts Conference for Women in Boston Thursday afternoon, the likely presidential candidate said she wanted to address ‘the pain and frustrations that many Americans are feeling’ following grand jury decisions not to indict the police officers who killed Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York City.” [MSNBC, [12/4/14](#)]

**Clinton: “Each Of Us Has To Grapple With Some Hard Truths About Race And Justice In America. Because Despite All The Progress We’ve Made Together, African-Americans, And Most Particularly, African-American Men, Are Still More Likely To Be Stopped And Searched By Police, Charge With Crimes, And Sentenced To Longer Prison Terms.”** ““In her strongest comments yet this year on criminal justice, Hillary Clinton called for grappling with ‘hard truths’ about racial discrimination in the justice system, and said ‘weapons of war’ have no place on the streets of American communities. ... ‘Each of us has to grapple with some hard truths about race and justice in America. Because despite all the progress we’ve made together, African-Americans, and most particularly, African-American men, are still more likely to be stopped and searched by police, charge with crimes, and sentenced to longer prison terms,’ she said.” [MSNBC, [12/4/14](#)]

#### **IN 2015, BILL CLINTON CONCEDED HIS ROLE IN THE GROWTH OF MASS INCARCERATION**

**HEADLINE: “Bill Clinton Concedes Role In Mass Incarceration”** [CNN, [5/6/15](#)]

**CNN: President Clinton Pointed To The “Three Strikes” Rule Passed Under His Administration As Laying Some Of The Groundwork For Over-Incarceration In America Today.** “President Bill Clinton on Wednesday conceded that over-incarceration in the United States stems in part from policies passed under his administration. Clinton signed into law an omnibus crime bill in 1994 that included the federal ‘three strikes’ provision, mandating life sentences for criminals convicted of a violent felony after two or more prior convictions, including drug crimes. On Wednesday, Clinton acknowledged that policy’s role in over-incarceration in an interview with CNN’s Christiane Amanpour.” [CNN, [5/6/15](#)]

**President Clinton On Crime Bill Passed Under His Administration: “We Cast Too Wide A Net And We Had Too Many People In Prison.”** “Clinton signed into law an omnibus crime bill in 1994 that included the federal ‘three strikes’ provision, mandating life sentences for criminals convicted of a violent felony after two or more prior convictions, including drug crimes... ‘The problem is the way it was written and implemented is we cast too wide a net and we had too many people in prison,’ Clinton said Wednesday. ‘And we wound up...putting so many people in prison that there wasn’t enough money left to educate them, train them for new jobs and increase the chances when they came out so they could live productive lives.’” [CNN, [5/6/15](#)]

**President Clinton On Crime Bill Passed Under His Administration: “We Wound Up...Putting So Many People In Prison That There Wasn’t Enough Money Left To Educate Them, Train Them For New Jobs And Increase The Chances When They Came Out So They Could Live Productive Lives.”** “Clinton signed into law an omnibus crime bill in 1994 that included the federal ‘three strikes’ provision, mandating life sentences for criminals convicted of a violent felony after two or more prior convictions, including drug crimes... ‘The problem is the way it was written and implemented is we cast too wide a net and we had too many people in prison,’ Clinton said Wednesday. ‘And we wound up...putting so many people in prison that there wasn’t enough money left to educate them, train them for new jobs and increase the chances when they came out so they could live productive lives.’” [CNN, [5/6/15](#)]

**CNN: President Clinton Did Blame Republicans “Who Strongly Pushed The ‘Three Strikes’ Provision” For Its Inclusion In The Final Crime Bill Passed Under His Administration.** “In the interview Wednesday, the former president didn't completely take the blame for those crime policies, though, pointing to Republicans who strongly pushed the ‘three strikes’ provision. ‘But I wanted to pass a bill and so I did go along with it,’ Clinton said, referencing the legislation that put more police officers on the streets, increased prison funding and banned assault weapons and large ammunition magazines.” [CNN, [5/6/15](#)]

- **CNN: “Clinton's Administration Did Attempt To Reform The Republican Proposal Of That Policy, But He And His Administration Touted The Benefits Of The ‘Three Strikes’ Provision Included In The Legislation He Signed.”** [CNN, [5/6/15](#)]

## **BILL AND HILLARY CLINTON ON PRIVATE PRISONS**

### **PRESIDENT CLINTON'S 1996 BUDGET PROPOSAL “WOULD LET PRIVATE COMPANIES MANAGE MOST OF THE NEW FEDERAL PRETRIAL DETENTION CENTERS, AS WELL AS MINIMUM- AND MEDIUM-SECURITY PRISONS”**

**Times-Picayune:** “President Clinton's 1996 Budget Includes A Proposal That Would Let Private Companies Manage Most Of The New Federal Pretrial Detention Centers, As Well As Minimum- And Medium-Security Prisons.” “Less than 2 percent of the nation's 1.5 million inmates are housed in private prisons. But President Clinton's 1996 budget includes a proposal that would let private companies manage most of the new federal pretrial detention centers, as well as minimum- and medium-security prisons.” [Times-Picayune, 3/26/95]

### **SENATOR CLINTON CO-SPONSORED THE PRIVATE PRISON INFORMATION ACT OF 2007, WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO INCREASE “TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AT PRIVATE PRISONS”**

**Hillary Clinton Press Release: Senator Clinton “Co- Sponsored The Private Prison Information Act Of 2007, Legislation Introduced By Senator Joe Lieberman To Increase Transparency And Accountability At Private Prisons.”** “Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton today co- sponsored the Private Prison Information Act of 2007, legislation introduced by Senator Joe Lieberman to increase transparency and accountability at private prisons. The Private Prison Information Act of 2007 will help to prevent abuse and neglect at private prisons by requiring public disclosure of information about their operations.” [Press Release, Office Of Senator Clinton, 12/10/07]

**In 2007, Senator Clinton Argued That “It Is Essential That There Be Public Disclosure About The Operation Of These Private Prisons.”** “As the federal government continues to contract out the incarceration of federal prisoners, it is essential that there be public disclosure about the operation of these private prisons,’ Senator Clinton said. ‘Right now, the public does not have the same right of access to information about private prisons as it has for federal prisons. There is a lack of accountability into how tax dollars are being spent, which can place the safety of correctional officers, surrounding communities, and prisoners at risk. This legislation will help to ensure that citizens and elected officials can properly assess the performance of private prisons and, if necessary, hold them accountable for misconduct.’” [Press Release, Office Of Senator Clinton, 12/10/07]

**In A Press Release Touting Her Co-Sponsorship Of The Private Prison Information Act Of 2007, Senator Clinton Said There Was A “Lack Of Accountability Into How Tax Dollars Are Being Spent, Which Can Place The Safety Of Correctional Officers, Surrounding Communities, And Prisoners At Risk.”** “As the federal government continues to contract out the incarceration of federal prisoners, it is essential that there be public disclosure about the operation of these private prisons,’ Senator Clinton said. ‘Right now, the public does not have the same right of access to information about private prisons as it has for federal prisons. There is a lack of accountability into how tax dollars are being spent, which can place the safety of correctional officers, surrounding communities, and prisoners at risk. This legislation will help to ensure that citizens and elected officials can properly assess the performance of

private prisons and, if necessary, hold them accountable for misconduct.” [Press Release, Office Of Senator Clinton, 12/10/07]

## HILLARY CLINTON PRIVATE PRISON DONATIONS

**Corrections Corp Of America Has Not Donated To Hillary Clinton.** [Opensecrets, accessed [4/28/15](#)]

**In 2008 Cycle, GEO Group Donated \$5,000 To Hillary Clinton.** [Opensecrets, accessed [4/28/15](#)]

**GEO Group Contributed \$5,000 To HILL PAC on 11/24/08.** [FEC, accessed [4/29/15](#)]

- **Hillary Clinton Received Money From GEO.** “The list of political hopefuls on the receiving end of GEO’s money isn’t confined to Florida. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who reopened two private prisons in California, got money; so did Mitt Romney, Hillary Clinton, John McCain and Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal.” [Palm Beach Post, 5/8/13]