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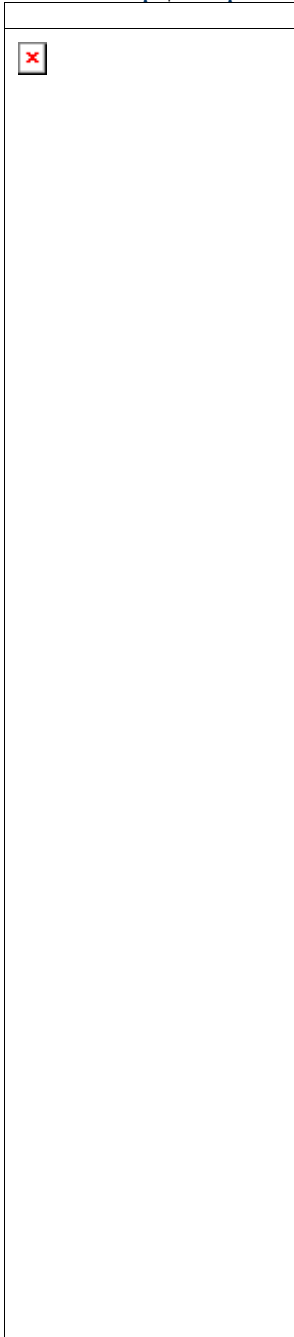
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STUDY OF OHIO

Colleges get less money than prisons

Wednesday, August 28, 2002

[Alan Johnson](#)

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

More black men are behind bars than in college classrooms in Ohio, according to a study by a Washington think tank.

The study by the Justice Policy Institute, "Cellblocks or Classrooms," also found that Ohio's spending on corrections from 1985 to 2000 rose far faster (211 percent, \$1 billion), than on higher education (38 percent, \$670 million).

The institute has published a series of reports regarding what it considers to be the overuse of imprisonment to solve social problems.

Amy Hannauer, executive director of Policy Matters of Ohio, a group affiliated with the institute, said the findings point out how higher education has consistently lost budget battles with the prison system in the past decade.

"With harder economic times ahead," Hannauer said, "we must reduce Ohio's reliance on expensive prisons so that we can invest in the higher-education system."

There were 23,000 black males in Ohio prisons in 2000 and 20,000 in higher education, the study found. Nationally, the study estimated 791,600 black males were behind bars and 603,000 enrolled in colleges and universities.

Andrea Dean, spokeswoman for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, confirmed the numbers for the state's black prison population and prison spending.

Fewer black males are in prison now -- 21,657 -- than two years ago, Dean said, but the prison population as a whole also dropped.

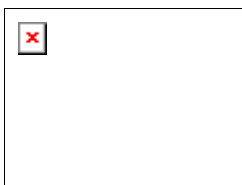
Blacks make up 50.9 percent of the Ohio prison population now,

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compared with 51.9 percent in August 2000 and 49.8 percent in August 1980. Ohio's total black population is 11.5 percent.

State Rep. Ray Miller, D-Columbus, called the numbers disturbing.

"It's important that people look beyond race to see the devastation that this is causing in our families," he said.

Miller said the good news is that the number of blacks graduating from high school and going on to college is increasing.

"Unfortunately, incarceration is increasing at a faster rate," he said.

Miller said colleges need to do a better job of recruiting black males.

The study was paid for by a branch of the Open Society Institute, an international foundation that supports educational, social, legal and health-care reform issues. Philanthropist George Soros, the founder of the institute, is one of the three major backers of Issue 1, the constitutional amendment on drug treatment that will appear on Ohio's Nov. 5 ballot.

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