



**In the mid 1980's Congress abolished parole and passed harsh drug sentencing laws. Many states followed, creating a tenfold increase in the number of drug offenders incarcerated.<sup>1</sup>**

*If prisoners were able to earn earlier release:*

- Incentives toward cooperation, study, and learning skills would create a safer environment for staff and prisoners alike.
- Families could be reunited earlier, with better prospects for successful reentry into society.
- High costs incarcerating drug offenders — \$9.4 billion annually<sup>2</sup> — would be dramatically reduced.
- Inhumane prison overcrowding would be redressed. The federal system is already 31% over capacity, and is growing at more than 9% annually — the equivalent of a prison a month to keep overcrowding from growing worse.<sup>3</sup>
- Prisons would less likely be breeding grounds for extremists and terrorists.<sup>4</sup>

**Isn't rewarding achievement the American Way?**

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<sup>1</sup> Beck Alan. J. Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 1999. Washington, DC: Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, April, 2000; Maguire, Kathleen and Ann. L. Pastore, editors Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1998. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Profile of Jail Inmates 1996 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, April 1996), pp. 1, 4; Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 1996 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1997), pp. 10-11; Criminal Justice Institute, Inc.: Camp, George M. and Camp, Camille Graham. The Corrections Yearbook, 1998. Middletown, Connecticut: Criminal Justice Institute, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> US Dept of Justice, An analysis of non-violent drug offenders with minimal criminal histories, DOJ executive summary, Feb 4, 1994. "Since the end of 1988, when the full impact of these new laws was realized, the prison population has grown by an average of over 650 inmates per month, or enough to fill one medium size institution with each new month." (p. 13)

<sup>4</sup> Cal Thomas, "Radical Recruiting in US Prisons", Lancaster New Era, June 22, 2002.