



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **MDOC Reduces Budget Deficit and Inmate Costs**

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Jackson - The Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) today announced that it has reduced its current fiscal year budget deficit by more than \$14 million dollars and has also reduced the daily/annual cost to incarcerate an inmate in a state operated facility by more than \$1,500. The reductions are a result of the department's commitment to maintaining its overriding mission of providing for public safety while focusing on controlling the costs associated with fulfilling its mission.

"We have focused our attention on reducing costs associated with corrections without adversely affecting security staff, inmate care or public safety," said MDOC Commissioner Robert L. Johnson. "Our resources are extremely limited, but we are committed to being fiscally responsible to taxpayers in a time when state revenues are tight."

In September 2001, Commissioner Johnson outlined the agency's projected FY 2002 deficit funding requirements to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. At that time, the projected FY 2002 deficit for all programs was \$21,201,203.

During November 2001, due to revenue collections not meeting estimates, general fund appropriations of \$8,131,930 were removed from the agency's FY 2002 budget. This reduction compounded MDOC's deficit situation, increasing the total deficit for all programs to a total of \$29,333,160. Budget reduction measures implemented by Commissioner Johnson made a positive impact on the deficit, creating a revised FY 2002 deficit request for all program of \$15,096,901.

"This is contingent on maintaining the current populations in most private and regional facilities," said Commissioner Johnson. "Also, an average reimbursable state inmate population of approximately 1,205 must be maintained in county jails for this remainder of the fiscal year."

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Commissioner Johnson, in a letter to both Senate and House Appropriations Chairman, recognized that there is no funding source for FY 2002 deficits. The Commissioner recognized that despite the agency's best efforts, the adjusted deficit projection represents obligations that must be met this fiscal year.

"With no deficit funding the agency will be unable to pay any local confinement bills past November 2001 or make any payment to the University of Mississippi Medical Center past March 2002," said Commissioner Johnson. "We recognize the tight fiscal shape the state is in and the very difficult job state lawmakers will have this session. We have reduced our agency operating budget deficit to zero and have compensated for the additional \$8 million dollar cut to our current budget."

MDOC has also successfully reduced the composite average daily and annual inmate costs. The incarceration cost for an inmate housed in a state operated facility is more than \$1,500 less than a year ago.

	<b><u>FY 2000</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2001</u></b>
Composite Average Cost Per Inmate Day	\$42.91	\$38.34
Composite Average Annual Cost Per Inmate	\$15,662	\$13,994

"We made a commitment to filling state operated beds first and as a result our costs have decreased," said Commissioner Johnson.

The figures represent the composite average of all custody levels of incarcerated inmates housed in MDOC operated facilities. MDOC operated facilities include the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, Mississippi State Penitentiary and South Mississippi Correctional Institution.

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