

Member of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly (MLA):

Re: Stop the privatization of corrections food services

Your government, on behalf of Saskatchewan families and communities, has a responsibility to provide safe, secure and efficient corrections and young offender services. I am strongly opposed to the idea of privatizing any part of our corrections system. Your government's recent decision to invite private companies to bid on operating food services in adult and young offenders' facilities opens the door to full-scale privatization of corrections. This is not acceptable to me.

Privatizing food services will cost more

Private companies are in business to make a profit, while the sole focus of a public enterprise is to provide a necessary service.

Experience with private corrections food service companies shows that contracting out is more expensive than providing the service in-house. Independent audits in many U.S. states have found that private companies have consistently extra-billed for meals that were never served. Taxpayers have been over-charged by millions of dollars. In Florida, a cost-value analysis showed that the state would save \$7 million annually if it returned food services to an in-house operation.

Safety and security at risk

Corrections is not like any other commercial operation. There are serious safety and security concerns. Public staff are trained and experienced members of the corrections team. They work alongside and supervise inmates in a high-risk environment. Staff in private companies typically receive less training, lower wages and benefits, which results in high staff turnover. Untrained and inexperienced staff can put themselves and others in danger.

Local businesses will be hurt

I am also concerned that privatization of corrections food services will hurt our local businesses. Saskatchewan companies currently supply food and equipment to our correctional facilities – everything from meat, eggs and fish to coffee and linen supplies. When a large corporation from outside the province takes over, they will buy supplies from their own outside sources. Local firms rely on doing business with corrections, and local families and communities rely on the spin-off jobs that result from these relationships.

There are many compelling reasons not to privatize corrections food services. I urge you to reject the plan to turn adult corrections and young offender food services over to a private company. Saskatchewan families and communities deserve a safe, secure and economical public corrections system.

Sincerely,

Signature

Address

Name (Please Print)

City, Town/Province/Postal code