

# Paying For Oppression: New Jersey Prisoners May Have To Pay For Their Own Incarceration



A New Jersey Prisoner brought to RAIL's attention a Bill that, if passed, would increase the oppression of prisoners and further consolidate national oppression. In essence, the bill would make prisoners responsible for paying for their own incarceration, and if unable, would give the state the right to seize and/or sell the property of inmates to cover the expenses.

An explanation of the bill, in typical bourgeois terminology states that NJ Senate Bill No. 373 "would make adult inmates in State correctional institutions responsible for their own support and maintenance and authorizes the State to place liens against the property and income of these inmates for the total cost of their care and maintenance." (1)

The explanation of the bill goes on to say that based on 1999 statistics, every year spent in prison would mean a debt of \$25,000 to the state. It also mentions that "it would be necessary to enforce any liens placed against the inmate's property and financial assets;" that is, those who cannot afford to finance their own oppression would be forced to pay through confiscation of property etc.

Since the majority of New Jersey inmates are Black (63%), and since "Hispanics" make up 18% of inmates, (2) New Jersey incarceration, just like incarceration throughout the rest of the country, represents one of the pillars of the oppression of the internal semi-colonies. Further, the fact that most inmates are poor or have relatively low incomes means that these debts will make it even more difficult for released prisoners to be able to survive.

Because of the rapid growth of the prison industrial complex and the increasing costs of keeping large numbers of people locked down, the state is seeking a way to alleviate its financial burden by passing it on to most oppressed and impoverished sections of the population. This absurd "solution" highlights the hypocrisy of the humanitarian rhetoric of the u.\$ government and proves the futility of liberal "anti-crime" efforts. Obviously if rehabilitation were part of the imperialist prison system, the state would not send released inmates back into a situation where, owing to their huge debts and lack of income, they would be forced to commit crimes again. This situation would be further heightened if Bill 373 passes since it would mean 5-digit debts for every year of prison.

RAIL looks to the Chinese socialist prison system under Mao Zedong as an example of how prisons can be used for rehabilitation- not national oppression. The Maoist prisons relied on study and self-criticism, and job training, to transform inmates who committed real crimes against the people, into productive members of society. RAIL understands that a real solution to crime cannot be attained under imperialism since Amerika's prisons main purpose is to perpetuate national oppression- not deter crimes.

Notes:

1. [http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2000/Bills/S0500/426\\_F1.HTM](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2000/Bills/S0500/426_F1.HTM)
2. [http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/offender\\_statistics/2001/2001\\_annrac.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/offender_statistics/2001/2001_annrac.pdf)

**RAIL is launching a campaign to stop Bill 373 from passing in the New Jersey Senate. See our petition at \_\_\_\_\_, or contact the following people to demand that the bill not be allowed to pass:**

**Senator Nicholas J. Sacco** (primary sponsor):

9060 Palisade Avenue  
North Bergen, NJ 07047 (201) 295-0200 [SenSacco@njleg.org](mailto:SenSacco@njleg.org)

**Senator John H. Adler** (primary sponsor):

231 Route 70 East  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-2421 (856) 428-3343 [SenAdler@njleg.org](mailto:SenAdler@njleg.org)

**Senator Anthony R. Bucco** (co-sponsor):

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Denville, NJ 07834 (973) 627-9700 [SenBucco@njleg.org](mailto:SenBucco@njleg.org)

**Senator Peter Inverso** (Chair of the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee):

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Hamilton, NJ 08690 (609) 586-1330 [SenInverso@njleg.org](mailto:SenInverso@njleg.org)



The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League is a mass organization of anti-imperialists led by the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM). See MIM's web page at <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/>  
For more information about this campaign, upcoming events, or general inquiries, contact us at:  
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