

Up To 10,000 Illinois Prisoners May Be Released

Jul 8, 2009 5:35 pm US/Central

Gov. Pat Quinn: Release Of Inmates Could Save Taxpayers \$125 Million



Reporting

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CHICAGO (CBS) ?

Up to 10,000 convicted criminals could soon be released early from prisons across Illinois. It's all because of the state's budget mess. Gov. Pat Quinn says cutting those prisoners loose could save more than \$100 million. But at what cost to you?

CBS 2 Political Editor Mike Flannery reports that some people are worried. They don't want to pay higher taxes. And they don't want these prison reductions set for Sept. 30, either.

"Oh, my God. I don't agree with that at all," one woman said. "They can pull money out of some other things."

[The proposed prisoner release stems from plans to lay off more than 1,000 corrections workers at Stateville Prison and a half-dozen facilities downstate.](#)

The state's making a list of thousands of so-called non-violent inmates with less than one year left to serve who could be released early. The governor says it could save taxpayers \$125 million.

But some don't like the idea.

"I don't like that at all," a woman said. "You know, because I think people have been placed there for a reason."

"If you cut the prison guards, that's gonna just about give the prisoners control of the jails," a man said. "Which will make that job very hazardous, more so than what it is."

Critics say Pat Quinn does not have authority to release thousands of Illinois inmates early.

"I don't like it. I threw a lot of those guys in prison back in the '90s, and they probably, a number of them, belong there," said Ill. Rep. Jim Durkin. "Public safety? Not the place to cut. That is the last place you should cut the budget is public safety. The greatest responsibility of the governor and the legislature is to keep the citizens safe. And I don't agree with this approach."

"What it's being done for is to try, through fear-mongering, cause people to support an income tax increase," said Bob Schillerstrom, Candidate for Governor. "It's the wrong thing to do."

Union leaders meeting in Springfield Wednesday were told the state may give early release to up to 10,000 non-violent inmates. While Corrections Director Michael Randle was mum on his plans for Stateville today, he did give union leaders a list of more than 500 layoffs effective by Sept. 30th.

<http://cbs2chicago.com/local/prison.stateville.budget.2.1077666.html>