

**Towns:** The people are not for it, on this issue. Charter schools they're not for either, on both sides of the House.

**EIR:** There have been a lot of charges against CCA. As you mentioned, there have been lawsuits, charging brutality against prisoners. There's a major lawsuit against the CCA facility in Youngstown [Ohio]. Have spokesmen for CCA denied any of these charges?

**Towns:** No one has publicly denied any charges that have been leveled against CCA, to my knowledge, and I try to keep up pretty well. To my knowledge, no one from the company, no official representative, has denied any allegations relative to their abusing people or inmates, or relative to all the infractions that they have been alleged to have committed.

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## Interview: Charles Quincy Troupe

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*Missouri State Rep. Quincy Troupe (D-St. Louis), a 24-year veteran of the Missouri Legislative Black Caucus and chairman of the Social Service and Corrections Committees of the House Appropriations Committee, was interviewed on Feb. 20 by Marianna Wertz.*



**EIR:** What is the status of your bill to stop prison privatization?

**Troupe:** It's waiting on the Committee on Corrections. It's waiting for them to do the hearing. As soon as they schedule a hearing, then we're going to start looking at what's going on. The general attitude is that nobody wants prison privatization. It's just a matter of educating the people.

The big problem we have is that the prison privatization industry is so tied in to law enforcement, so tied in to the good ol' boys club—in other words, they are a part of that national, international network, and it's hard for local people to come out against it. When they come in, they come in with such weight and they come in on top. Either they come in through the governors or the speakers and the senators, and then the weight of that is usually so awesome that most legislators and many senators just don't rebel against it. Plus, they spend a lot of money, they buy up people. Like in Tennessee, they bought up everybody in Tennessee, all the leadership in the House is bought. You've seen signs of that happening all over the country.

But it's interesting that they closed down their operations in Texas.

**EIR:** That was my next question. Can you tell me what happened there?

**Troupe:** The only thing I can think that happened is that the publicity and all of the problems, the shortcomings of the operation in Texas hurt the whole privatization issue, so they had to serve somebody's head up for the program.

**EIR:** So, Capital Correctional Resources, Inc. (CCRI) pulled out of Texas and shut down all their private prisons last month?

**Troupe:** I think they pulled out by agreement, that somebody had to go, to make [Texas Gov. George W.] Bush look good. That's what I think it was. I think it was more of a show than anything else. I don't know if the county or the state bought those prisons and are now going to operate those prisons as publicly owned and operated prisons. If that is the case, then I see it as progress. If they are just going to create a subsidiary to CCRI to come in and operate those prisons, then I don't see that as being any progress.

**EIR:** Are your prisoners all back in Missouri?

**Troupe:** Yes. We made a decision that we'd rather have our prisoners in tents than to have them in Texas.

**EIR:** Will your bill be coming up this year?

**Troupe:** Oh yes, it should be coming up the latter part of this month. I'm looking at it kind of favorably. If I get it on the floor, I know I can pass it.

The other good thing is, we cut \$27 million out of appropriations for corrections and prisons and put it in social services. The governor took \$30 million out of social services and put it in corrections. I took \$27 million back out of corrections and put it back into social services, with a unanimous vote for 1998.

We are trying to slow down the expansion. We're trying to look at alternative sentences and we're trying to kill a \$125 million prison here in Missouri.

If we do that, that's going to be an awesome, awesome turn of events that might just shatter the governor's whole "economic development" program, which is rooted in building prisons in rural areas, to provide jobs for those communities, to stabilize those communities. The urban people are the ones that are occupying those prisons and it really borders on overt, gross racism.

**EIR:** It sounds like a prison police state.

**Troupe:** It is. But you know, even the white people are beginning to see it now. Rural white people are saying, we're creating a police state. They see it now. That's the beauty, and that's the salvation, in all of this, that they are beginning to see it. They benefit from it, but they see it. And now that they see it, the urge to do something about it is going to grow. I think you're going to see a lot of rebellion across the country with these legislatures.