

PEOPLE NOT PRISONS
Statement on the Prison Relocation

About the Decision to Relocate Utah State Prison in Draper

We support building a new prison for the safety and wellbeing of the inmates. The new facility must be easily accessible to qualified professionals who can help assure successful treatment outcomes, to family members and friends who are critical to successful reentry, and to thousands of volunteers, without whom the system cannot function. We CAN, and should, do better by them all.

We believe a new prison will support critical reforms in inmate rehabilitation and reentry. We are also hopeful the design process will enable discussion of other important correctional improvements, such as: decreased use of solitary confinement, adequate medical and mental health care, full access to services, programs, and facilities for all ages and abilities, gender responsive housing for women, humane treatment of geriatric prisoners, and the development of employable and in-demand skills.

About 95% of the people incarcerated in Utah will eventually return to our communities. Whether we know it or not, most of us are connected to someone who is, or has been, incarcerated at the prison. We cannot simply wish for the prison to be far away from the rest of us. The public interest is served by building a safer, more humane, and constitutionally-sound facility.

It is unrealistic to expect all Utahns to support relocating the prison. Furthermore, we are not recommending a specific site. We do, however, ask that members of the public and their elected representatives share their opinions in a fair and thoughtful way that does not further stigmatize the people who live and work at the prison.

Why Not Keep It In Draper?

We don't believe that a new, state-of-the art facility – one that is fully supportive of criminal justice reform and correctional best practices – will ever be built in Draper absent the political support for relocating the prison. There must be an economic motivation for the state to embark on these important improvements. The relocation is that motivation.

What is PEOPLE NOT PRISONS?

People Not Prisons is a loose coalition of advocates and advocacy organizations who are concerned about the treatment of inmates, the mentally ill and disabled, volunteers and public servants who work in corrections, individuals with substance use disorder, and others who find themselves in the criminal justice system. The participating organizations do not agree on everything, but they do agree that the treatment of people within our criminal justice system should be the top consideration in policy decisions.

PNP includes:

- NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) – Utah
- Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness (USARA)
- The Disability Law Center
- The ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) of Utah
- New Roads Behavioral Health
- Utah Prisoner Advocate Network
- Odyssey House
- Utah Prison Support
- First Step House
- Utah Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (UAATP)
- The Utah AFL-CIO
- Several formerly incarcerated Utahns, and
- Various other individual advocates.