



**The**  
**Alliance for Safe Communities**  
[asc.rhodeisland@gmail.com](mailto:asc.rhodeisland@gmail.com)  
[www.asc-ri.org](http://www.asc-ri.org)

## **Closing the ACI's Donald Price Building.**

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Once again legislators and top administrative brass at the Rhode Island Department of Corrections have set saving budget dollars as a priority over community safety. They have announced the closing of the Donald Price Medium Security facility at the Adult Correctional Institute (ACI).

This would be the second closing of that Building since 1992 when it was consequently reopened five years later. This is one "Jeanie" you cannot put back into the bottle. This is foreseen by sources close to ASC as the final closing of the Donald Price Building.

In December, 2010, A.T. Wall, Director of the RI Department of Corrections, stated that a 15% cut from its \$182 million budget would result in a smaller prison system that would force the state to relax its standards for who goes to prison and for how long. At that time he entertained the possibility of closing High Security as well as the Price facility.

Wall admittedly stated, "I cannot credibly advocate that course of action. I offered it because we had to hit the target."

Budget cut proposals became legislative reality. Corrections Director Wall offers little or no believable reassurance in recent statements to the public regarding catastrophic consequences to prison stability or community safety following the closure of the Price facility.

### **Reality at the Price Building**

In May, 2011, 42% of inmates scored as medium security risk, more than any other type. This necessitates medium as the only level for which the ACI has two units: Price with over 300 inmates and Moran with a 1066 bed limit. Two units give the department the ability to separate gang members and other inmates prone to fighting. Minimum inmates live in dormitories with as many as 8 to a room. Over the past decade minimum security has seen increases of more hostile and predatory individuals who when sent there pose a risk to both officers and inmates of becoming victimized.

Are we to assume that as of January, 2012, when the Price Building is closed, we will see 300 prisoners administratively reclassified as Minimum Security Risks and moved to the dorms? Or will we see 300 inmates of that higher security level simply released onto the streets of our cities and towns?

These concerns have been reiterated repeatedly by the Brotherhood of Corrections Officers, the union representing state workers in the prison system. Consistent and steadfast, they've

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highlighted safety risks within the prison and with the release of at-risk individuals who could impact community safety.

Accused by some of mounting a propaganda campaign, the Brotherhood ran an add in last weeks *Providence Journal* implicating actions of the legislature and quoting A.T. Wall's past concerns. They also reaffirmed their on-going debate on safety concerns within the ACI. It is their contention that budgetary concerns take priority over safety.

A.T. Wall's immediate reaction to this add, exuded nothing but confidence regarding closing the Price Bldg. reviewing of each case, and lack of acknowledgment that there will be any risks posed to communities. It was quite a contrast to his earlier statements.

Such cynicism toward hard facts, will lead to an agenda of further prison closings, early releases, "good times" for all criminals, and communities put at risk.

ASC urges all Rhode Islanders to be proactive and to contact their legislators with their concerns of community safety before more communities in Rhode Island are negatively impacted.

*ASC-RI is a non-profit dedicated to assisting Communities to achieve the promise of a safe environment that is made to them by government.*