

From: **James Wright** [REDACTED]
Date: Thu, Apr 14, 2011 at 10:13 PM
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT -- Where to count a prisoner
To: votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov

Commissioners,

I have two thoughts on the matter.

1. Counting prisoners where they are incarcerated provides a positive benefit to the community surrounding the facility in that, though they cannot vote, the "headcount benefits" in state and federal monies is blind to that little fact. But, the community is also already benefiting from the jobs, from the purchase of supplies and from construction and reconstruction expenditures occurring at the facility.
2. To count prisoners in the community where they were sentenced would require access to information which is probably not readily available. It is certainly not in the census data. Each facility has the data, but using it to inflate other communities by a small percent each would be time consuming and of little value to any of those communities. Likewise, removing the inmate count from the local area might have a negative effect on that community.

Both of these thoughts ignore one very important fact. Convicted Felons are not permitted to vote and will never again vote unless pardoned. From an elections viewpoint, they are invisible, though their prior actions may and do affect many decisions of voters and their elected officials. The impact of the felony prisoner population on state and local politics lies solely with their fiscal impact to areas near the prisons and to the state (budget).

One more observation: the people who maintain separation of those prisoners from the rest of us have a very strong and vocal union and they live in the communities local to the facilities.

Jim Wright

a voter from San Jose