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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

FOIL Disclosure: Despite Millions In Revenue From NYS Agencies – Over \$340 Million Spanning Nine Fiscal Years – Corcraft Continues To Pay Incarcerated New Yorkers Pennies On The Dollar

Advocates Call On Albany To Compensate Incarcerated New Yorkers The Minimum Wage For Their Labor

(NEW YORK, NY) – Criminal justice and workers’ rights advocates released data obtained via a Freedom of Information Law request from the New York State Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS) concerning [Corcraft](#), the state-owned corporation that manufactures a myriad of products, including furniture, personal care products, license plates, janitorial supplies, and other items. Corcraft also offers mold and asbestos removal, among other services. **Despite generating \$30-\$40 million in revenues annually in sales from other state agencies**, Corcraft pays incarcerated New Yorkers as little as \$.26 cents per hour – a far cry from **New York City’s current minimum wage of \$15 per hour.**

Over a span of nine fiscal years from 2009-2010 to 2017-2018, **Corcraft earned over \$340 million in revenue.** This figure only includes sales made to New York State government agencies and does not account for complete revenues.

Just this week, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that [incarcerated New Yorkers had begun to mass produce hand sanitizer](#) – known as NYS Clean – for Corcraft as part of the state’s response to the Coronavirus crisis. **As of August 2019, Corcraft employed 1,820**

incarcerated New Yorkers throughout the state, but with Governor Cuomo’s announcement this week, the corporation may be gearing up to employ hundreds more.

The City of New York remains one of Corcraft’s largest customers, **purchasing \$73,651,178** of products and services from the corporation between fiscal years 2013 – 2019.

Corcraft Revenue from State Agencies by Fiscal Year

<u>2009 -</u> <u>2010</u>	<u>2010 -</u> <u>2011</u>	<u>2011 -</u> <u>2012</u>	<u>2012 -</u> <u>2013</u>	<u>2013 -</u> <u>2014</u>	<u>2014 -</u> <u>2015</u>	<u>2015 -</u> <u>2016</u>	<u>2016 -</u> <u>2017</u>	<u>2017 -</u> <u>2018</u>
\$40,860,803.88	\$39,716,425.86	\$35,051,189.08	\$32,808,954.77	\$34,919,849.65	\$37,058,344.86	\$40,330,749.95	\$38,371,490.15	\$40,968,285.05
							Total	\$340,086,093.25

The Legal Aid Society said – “It is unconscionable that, despite raking in profits hand-over-fist, year after year, Corcraft continues to pay incarcerated workers pennies on the dollar for manufacturing products and performing services. It’s equally shocking and disappointing that the City exploits this cheap labor as one of Corcraft’s best customers. Albany simply must compensate our clients and other incarcerated New Yorkers at the minimum wage for their work. Anything less is simply slave labor.”

Bianca Tylek, Executive Director of Worth Rises, said – “Governor Cuomo’s announcement this week regarding New York’s ability to mass produce hand sanitizer amid the Coronavirus brought to light a decades-long issue about the value of incarcerated workers. For decades, incarcerated New Yorkers have been manufacturing essential products and providing critical services across our state. The value of their labor has amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars for New York, but it has never been reflected in their compensation—just pennies per hour. And it’s not just the revenue generated by Corcraft that filters into the state coffers, but also the millions in savings the state sees when it employs incarcerated people to maintain its prisons. Incarcerated New Yorkers, their families, and their victims all suffer gravely while the state benefits handsomely. It’s time, today, that New York close the loophole in the Thirteenth Amendment that allows slavery to persist in our prisons and jails, and pay incarcerated workers like all other workers because labor is labor.”

Color Of Change said – “Incarcerated people deserve a fair wage. Period. The very idea that Corcraft, Governor Cuomo, and New York State feel emboldened to pay fellow New Yorkers less than a dollar a day, while they rake in millions in profits, is itself a public crisis. No emergency can excuse the continued exploitation of poor and marginalized communities.”

Truth Pharma said – “Governor Cuomo is exhibiting his lack of care and commitment to saving lives from an overdose by his lack of commitment to end the use of slave labor in New York State prisons and his promotion of companies profiteering from the misfortune of others. Until New York State and Governor Cuomo end the policies of allowing companies like Corcraft to make a profit from slave labor, we will never be able to end the War on Drugs which is destroying lives and killing New Yorkers.”

“Rather than issue executive clemencies to elderly incarcerated people at a stroke of the pen to add millions of dollars to his war chest for combating the coronavirus, the Governor instead has double down on the punishment paddle to exploit the most vulnerable among us. Why not contract with businesses in the free society as producers of germ-fighting agents? Forcing people in prison to produce these items, for as little as \$0.26 per hour, is no different than companies that hire people abroad and pay them pennies to avoid paying minimum wages to people on the homeland. Essentially, the Governor is confronted with two interrelated crises - the coronavirus and a staggeringly 1 out of 5 elderly people in New York state prisons - a population that is projected to increase and New York State Comptroller, Thomas P. DiNapoli, declared ‘must be addressed,’” said **Anthony Dixon, Director of Community Engagement, Parole Preparation Project.**

“There is nothing free about the hand sanitizer Governor Cuomo is peddling amid the growing coronavirus crisis,” said **Megan French-Marcelin, campaign coordinator of WORKINGfuture, JustLeadershipUSA.** “There is nothing free in forcing thousands of incarcerated people across New York State to labor on behalf of other people’s safety while the state denies them their own safety, wellbeing, and dignity. While New York continues to profit off the backs of communities with low income and Black and brown communities, we say no more. There is no amount of safety when there is no freedom.”

Additional Resources:

[Corcraft Catalog Contract](#)

[Total Citywide Spend with Corcraft](#)

[FOIL Request](#)

[FOIL Response Cover](#)

[FOIL Response Attachments](#)

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>

Color Of Change is the nation’s largest online racial justice organization. We help people respond effectively to injustice in the world around us. As a national online force driven by over 1.4 million members, we move decision-makers in corporations and governments to create a more human and less hostile world for Black people in America. Visit www.colorofchange.org.

Worth Rises is a national advocacy organization dedicated to dismantling the prison industry and ending the exploitation of those it touches. www.worthrises.org