

By Marc A. Levin and Khalil A. Cumberbatch

America's prisons may be succeeding at keeping incarcerated people inside, but they are increasingly also keeping out the people needed to run them effectively. [A rash of corrections staffing vacancies](#) has been escalating since the start of the pandemic. This threatens incarcerated people and staff still on the job, as well as public safety.

For example, [nearly 34 percent](#) of staff positions are vacant in North Carolina prisons, and in Florida incarcerated people have been [waiting for months in local jails](#) because staff shortages have prevented the prison system from picking them up on a timely basis. In New York City, [pandemic-exacerbated staff shortages](#) almost paralyzed operations at Rikers Island, the city's largest jail complex.

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