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State officials: Inmates sleeping on jail floors

By [The Associated Press](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- West Virginia officials say overcrowding has reached a critical point in the state's regional jails and prisons.

Joe Thornton, secretary of military affairs and public safety, says the issue has gotten so bad, inmates have slept on mattresses on the floors of some facilities.

"We're getting to a point where we have no room at the inn. We don't have the right of refusal," Thornton said. "It's a critical issue that's not going to go away easily."

The Charleston Daily Mail reports that the Regional Jail Authority took up the problem at its quarterly meeting Wednesday.

The overcrowding problem stems from having too many offenders in the state's prisons. Currently, there are about 1,600 of the Department of Corrections 6,639 inmates being held in regional jails around the state.

One temporary solution to the problem has been the installation additional bunks at the 10 regional jails.

Other recommendations include accelerated parole for eligible inmates and efforts to enhance support to work release facilities and day report centers.

Thornton said adding on to any prisons or jails was "not on the table" at this point because of the state of the economy. And, he said building another prison facility or jail was all but out of the question, citing a \$200 million price tag.