



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Brown Vetoes Dignity Not Detention Act, Sides With Profit Over People *Bill Would Have Made California First State in the Nation to End Private Immigration Detention*

SACRAMENTO, CA — As the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) and Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC), we are deeply disappointed in Governor Brown's decision today to veto Senate Bill 1289, also known as the Dignity Not Detention Act. With this veto, Governor Brown sends a troubling message to the over 5,000 immigrants held in detention facilities each day across the state that California will continue to turn a blind eye to the profit-driven, well-reported human rights abuses that occur without accountability or transparency.

"SB 1289 presented a ripe opportunity to continue a legacy of leadership on pro-immigrant policies but today, California stands on the wrong side of history. Governor Brown's signature would have ensured that California would no longer be part of a system that profits from the suffering of immigrants. Despite today's disappointment, we will continue fighting for reform and for an end to all immigration detention.

Though California refuses to lead by example, we find ourselves in the midst of a national dialogue and movement to amend our country's punitive approach to incarceration. The Department of Justice (DOJ) plans to part ways with private prison companies (at the federal level), the Department of Homeland (DHS) security is currently reviewing its own practices, and we urge our national leaders to keep the momentum going. We demand that DHS sever its ties with private immigration detention immediately and decrease reliance on the broken immigration detention system," said **Grisel Ruiz**, staff attorney at the ILRC.

This important piece of legislation would have prohibited local governments in the state from contracting with private companies seeking to operate immigration detention facilities and would have guaranteed that immigrants held in detention facilities across the state were treated according to shared and enforceable standards of care, while also providing extra protections for LGBTQ-identifying immigrants. The bill additionally would have granted the California Attorney General and local district attorneys the ability to sue on behalf of an immigrant if their rights were violated under these standards.

Though immigration detention in all contexts is a damaging, needless and costly practice, private prisons corporations have played a special role in keeping the broken immigration detention system alive. Detention has become an increasingly for-profit venture, with 73 percent of detention beds nationwide currently operated by private prison companies. Inadequate medical care and human rights abuses have contributed to over 160 reported deaths in custody, including 23 individuals in California since 2003. By contracting their immigration detention operations out to these for-profit companies, cities and counties have effectively sanctioned and monetized immigrant detention, an unnecessary practice that lacks accountability and has repeatedly proven to be rife with physical, sexual and emotional abuse of immigrants, sometimes even leading to deaths in custody.

"An economy based upon the confinement of people for profit is immoral and should be illegal. We are deeply saddened that our state will remain complicit in profit-driven human suffering. However, we applaud the California Legislature, the city of Berkeley, the county of Alameda, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, and over 50 organizations for their strong support for this bill. The legislature's leadership represents a growing awareness of this antiquated and unjust system of oppression that profits off of the confinement of people, one that we urge the Department of Homeland Security to take into account as it considers ending its own relationship with private prison companies," said **Christina Fialho**, co-founder/executive director of CIVIC.

SB 1289 was authored by Senator Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) and co-sponsored by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) and Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC).

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About the Immigrant Legal Resource Center

The Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) is a national nonprofit that works with immigrants, community organizations, legal professionals, law enforcement, and policy makers to build a democratic society that values diversity and the rights of all people. Through community education programs, legal training & technical assistance, and policy development & advocacy, the ILRC's mission is to protect and defend the fundamental rights of immigrant families and communities. www.ilrc.org

About Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement

CIVIC is the national immigration detention visitation network, which is working to end U.S. immigration detention by monitoring human rights abuses, elevating stories, building community-based alternatives to detention, and advocating for system change. Our network visits and monitors 43 immigration detention facilities on a weekly basis, and receives over 7,000 calls from people in immigration detention in all 210 detention facilities each month. www.endisolation.org