



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2017

Contact: Kemi Bello, kbello@ilrc.org, (415) 321-8568

Christina Fialho, CFialho@endisolation.org, 510-612-3570

California's New Budget Adopts Groundbreaking Changes Concerning Immigration Detention

Provisions Include Moratorium on Detention Contract Expansion & Creation of State Detention Facility Oversight

SAN FRANCISCO, CA. – Today, the California Legislature approved the AB 103 budget action, which includes two key provisions that will curtail the growth of immigration detention in California and give the state Attorney General \$1 million to monitor all immigration detention facilities in California. This law will be the first in the United States to give a state agency the power to monitor immigration detention facilities and the only in the country to put a moratorium on the expansion of immigration detention in public jails across a state.

The budget action comes as 42 [women](#) and [men](#) ended their hunger strike today at Adelanto, California's largest private immigration detention facility. These women and men were protesting inhumane detention conditions, including medical neglect and sexual assault. Just this week, the men were drenched with pepper spray, beaten and transferred into a high security area by private prison guards. The women were threatened with the same treatment.

The budget action prevents California's municipalities from entering into new contracts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or any federal agency for the purpose of detaining immigrants in city or county jails. It also prevents the expansion of detention beds in publicly run facilities under existing contracts with ICE, including any facilities housing immigrant children.

The budget action also sends a strong message to detention facility operators that California will be watching to ensure that they are treating every single person in their custody with the humanity they deserve.

The budget action tasks the state Attorney General with monitoring all detention facilities in California, including conditions of confinement, standards of care and circumstances around apprehension and transfer. These reviews will occur over the next 10 years, with findings made available to the public. The first report is due by March 1, 2019.

AB 103 perfectly complements SB 29, the Dignity Not Detention Act, which seeks to remove California's municipalities from the business of private immigration detention altogether. With support from a statewide coalition of groups, including the California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance (CIYJA), the Immigrant Youth Coalition (IYC), and Human Rights Watch (HRW), SB 29 is currently in the Assembly and will be heard in the Assembly Judiciary Committee. SB 29 is authored by California State 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). The ILRC and CIVIC advocated for and consulted on the immigration detention provisions in today's state budget action.

California State Senator Ricardo Lara said:

“I want to congratulate both the Legislature and the Governor for standing up for our most vulnerable and sending a different message than what the federal government is sending to our immigrant communities. This isn’t really about immigration -- this is about human rights and assuring that we uphold our American constitutional values.”

Christina Fialho, an attorney and the Co-Executive Director at Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC) said:

“While our ultimate goal is to abolish immigration detention nationwide, this is a powerful first step in a state with the largest immigrant population in the country. [California holds the most immigrants](#) after Texas, and about [a quarter of all people in immigration detention](#) pass through California detention facilities each year. What we do here in California has a direct effect on the national immigration detention context. While California cannot end immigration detention on its own, California can lead the way. We hope that this bill inspires others states to step up to ensure that the Trump administration’s cold-hearted attempt to jail even more immigrants does not become a reality.”

“The Attorney General of California now has the power and resources to oversee an industry that has operated with impunity for far too long. Hunger strikers and other immigrants in detention face physical assault on almost a daily basis in California. CIVIC’s investigation into [sexual and physical assault](#) found that out of the 4,500 complaints lodged with Homeland Security’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in California, OIG investigated less than 1 percent. If the federal government won’t regulate its detention facilities, the state of California will provide its own oversight over immigration detention facilities.”

Grisel Ruiz, Staff Attorney at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center said:

“These are groundbreaking advancements in our nation’s troubled immigration detention landscape. This law will be the first in the United States to give a state agency the power to monitor immigration detention facility conditions and makes California the only state in the country to put a moratorium on the expansion of immigration detention.”

“California prides itself on the just and humane treatment of all of its residents, and immigrants are no exception. While California cannot work alone to fix our impractical federal immigration system, including its abuse-ridden detention arm, our state’s leaders have committed themselves to advancing commonsense policies such as AB 103 that underscore our collective values of fair and compassionate treatment, welcoming and diversity.”

To request an interview with any of the individuals above, please contact Kemi Bello at kbello@ilrc.org.

###

About the Immigrant Legal Resource Center

The Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) is a national nonprofit that works with immigrants, community organizations, legal professionals, 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

Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC) is the national immigration detention visitation network, which is working to end U.S. immigration detention. CIVIC visits and monitors 43 of the largest immigration detention facilities in the country on a weekly basis and runs the largest national hotline for people in immigration detention. CIVIC is headquartered in California. www.endisolation.org