



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Justice Announces Departure from Federal Use of Private Prisons

The ILRC Encourages the Department of Homeland Security and State of California to Follow Suit

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — As we welcome this morning's Department of Justice's [memorandum](#) to reduce and eventually end the Bureau of Prisons' use of privately operated facilities, we demand that the Department of Homeland Security – the largest U.S. client of private prison companies – do the same for its privately-run immigration detention centers.

In response to this announcement, Eric Cohen, **Executive Director of the Immigrant Legal Resource Center**, released the following statement:

“Private prisons – and the for-profit companies that run them – have for far too long played a fraught and inappropriate role in perpetuating mass incarceration. Many reports have revealed that private prisons have [appalling conditions](#), leaving behind a trail of deaths and human rights abuses in their wake. Moreover, their [profit motives](#) have effectively incentivized the increased criminalization and incarceration of entire communities, particularly people of color and immigrants.

Corrections Corporation of America and the GEO group, the two corporations that operate the majority of private facilities for the Department of Justice, also operate and mismanage immigration detention centers for the Department of Homeland Security. Yet the omission of those detention centers in today's announcement, along with the continued practice of [holding mothers and children seeking asylum in detention](#), speaks to this administration's tendency of excluding immigrants from much-needed reforms to the mass incarceration system. We look to this and future administrations to [reform the 1996 immigration laws](#) that directly led to the policies that fuel mass detention and deportation today.

California is poised to join the Department of Justice through its hopeful passage this month of [the Dignity Not Detention Act](#), a bill that would end the use of private immigration detention centers across the state, while ensuring basic standards of care and extra protections for LGBTQ-identified immigrants. We urge the California legislature and eventually our Governor to ensure that history shows California as a leader in standing up to private prison corporations.

This is a promising signal to the hopeful end of private prisons, which have long played a defining and devastating role incarcerating members of the immigrant community. It is now time for the state of California and the Department of Homeland Security to follow suit and stand with people over profit by pushing back on private immigration detention. Our communities deserve dignity, not detention.”

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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

