

March 31, 2015

Via electronic Mail
Chairman Phil Mendelson
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Ste. 504
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson and Council Members:

The **86** undersigned organizations urge you to ensure all District residents have access to high quality healthcare, by voting “no” on the Corizon contract and taking the necessary steps to award a provider with a record of providing responsible, high quality care to individuals who are incarcerated.

Corizon has been sued over 1,000 times in the past five years because of horrific deaths and permanent injuries to men and women in their care. Problems have been documented in lawsuits and in court and police investigations in Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

This is not about the D.C. Council meddling in contracts but about safeguarding the human rights of the District's incarcerated residents. The District should not be added to the above list of jurisdictions whose residents have been wronged by Corizon.

As the nation is taking steps to reform a criminal justice system that perpetuates poverty and disproportionately impacts people of color and the low income population, the District too must confront a similar history at the D.C Jail. Currently, African Americans are overrepresented in the DC Jail: 91% of DC inmates are Black, while only 55% of District residents are black; 37% of male inmates report having less than a high school diploma. As they return to the community, these individuals already grapple with many obstacles; the District should not be adding another barrier in the form of poor health and mental health care.

Providing quality healthcare for our incarcerated residents is an opportunity to meet the health and mental health needs of one of the city's most marginalized populations. With the right provider, the jail can be a place where the city addresses public health crises such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and diabetes. It's critical that we facilitate continuity of care for this population by creating links to services when they are discharged.

By rejecting the healthcare contract with Corizon, the Council can demonstrate that we value all lives and will protect the human rights of everyone in our city, including the rights of D.C. residents who are incarcerated. There are improvements that should be made to health and mental health services at the jail. However, contracting with a for-profit company - particularly one with a prolific track record of

questionable health care practices - is not the improvement we seek. Instead of continuing to pursue approval of this contract, the city needs to move forward, working with the D.C. Department of Corrections, to revise the flawed RFP process that would result in a contract award to a company with Corizon's abysmal track record. We are looking forward to a future where D.C. correctional facilities and practices are a model for the country.

Please take the first step by rejecting the contract with Corizon as unworthy of our city. We thank you for your consideration and welcome the opportunity to talk to you further about how we can ensure high quality healthcare for District residents who are incarcerated. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tammy Seltzer, University Legal Services, at 202-547-0198 x 121 or Samantha Davis, SOME, at 202-797-8806 x2112.

Sincerely,

ACLU-NCA	Free Minds Book Club & Writing
AFL-CIO	Workshop
Campaign for Youth Justice	Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance
Cherish, LLC.	Georgetown University Pride
Christ House	Grassroots DC
Citizens United for Rehabilitation of	Grassroots Leadership
Errants	GWU Alpha Phi Omega
DC Books to Prisons Project	HIPS
DC Employment Justice Center	Homeless Services Unit The Downtown
DC Environmental Network	Cluster of Congregations
DC Fair Budget Coalition	Human Rights Defense Center
DC for Democracy	Hyacinth's Place
DC Jobs Council	In The Public Interest
DC Jobs with Justice	Internaitonal CURE
DC Lawyers for Youth	Joseph's House
DC Metropolitan Foster and Adoptive	Jubilee Housing
Parent Association	Justice Policy Institute
DC Primary Care Association	Latin American Youth Center
DC Statehood Green Party	Many Languages One voice
District of Columbia Peer Support	Mary's Center
Association	Metropolitan Washington Public Health
Emmaus Services for the Aging	Association
Empower DC	Miriam's Kitchen
Family Voices of the District of Columbia	movement for love and unity
Inc.	NAACP DC Branch
Federal Public Defender Service for the	National African American Drug Policy
District of Columbia	Coalition
FOPDOC Corrections Union	

National Association of Concerned Veterans
National Black United Front
New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
ONE DC
P.E.E.R.S.
Pathways to Housing DC
Popular Resistance
Positive Force
Private Corrections Institute
Progressive cheverly
Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia
Reasons To Hope Foundation
Reentry Task Force
REPECT DC/FABC
Restaurant opportunities Center-DC
Restorations Ministries, Inc.
Returning Citizens United, Inc.
Sasha Bruce Youthwork
Service to Justice
Sin Fronteras
SOME (So Others Might Eat)
Southeast Ministry

The Black Swan Academy
The Campbell Center
The DC Center for the LGBT Community
The DC Recovery Network
The District Church
The Family Place
The Reentry Network for Returning Citizens
The Washington Literacy Center
The Washington Peace Center
The Way Home DC
Thursday Network- Greater Washington
Urban League Young Professionals
University Legal Services
Washington Ethical Society
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
We Act Radio
We Are Family
Welcome Home Reentry Program of Catholic Charities

cc:

Chairman Phil Mendelson
Councilmember Yvette Alexander
Councilmember Charles Allen
Councilmember Anita Bonds
Councilmember Mary Cheh
Councilmember Jack Evans
Councilmember David Grosso
Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie
Councilmember Brianne Nadeau
Councilmember Vincent Orange
Councilmember Elissa Silverman