



Human Rights Defense Center

DEDICATED TO PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

**[Click here for our GoFundMe Campaign:
CoreCivic & GEO: Don't Cage Kids!](#)**

Stop Private Prison Firms from Housing Immigrant Parents, Children & Families!

*Private prison companies should not profit from housing immigrant families,
and families should not be separated, period.*

Summary of the issue

For-profit prison companies CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corp. of America or CCA) and GEO Group operate immigrant detention centers across the U.S.

This campaign, by the [Human Rights Defense Center](#), has introduced shareholder resolutions with both companies that would prohibit them from housing any immigrant children separated from their parents, and any immigrant parents separated from their children. Families should not be separated, period.

The goal of the campaign is to ensure the two largest companies that house immigrant detainees cannot hold separated parents and children, should the administration's separation policy be renewed in the future.

Our associate director already owns enough stock to file the resolutions with CoreCivic and GEO, and has filed other activist resolutions previously. We already have an attorney to assist with the SEC review process. All we need is your support!

A more detailed description

For-profit prison companies CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corp. of America) and GEO Group operate a network of immigrant detention centers across the U.S. Even though immigrant detainees awaiting hearings and asylum evaluations are technically in civil detention, they are typically held in prison-like conditions.

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Recently, the Trump administration's policy of separating immigrant parents from their children has made headlines [across the nation](#) and [internationally](#). Critics have rightfully condemned the practice of separating families pending immigration proceedings. There have been disturbing news accounts of the [impact this policy has had on children](#), as well as reports that children have been [involuntarily drugged](#), subjected to [sexual abuse](#) and used as [leverage](#) by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to force parents to agree to deportation in order to be reunited with their children.

This is unacceptable in a country that prides itself on liberty, democracy and justice. It is also unacceptable for private companies like CoreCivic and GEO Group to profit from immigrant detention – particularly the detention of parents and children, whether they have been separated or not. Both companies operate “residential centers” in Texas that house immigrant families – in [Dilley](#) and [Karnes](#).

Even Ivanka Trump has described her father's family separation policy as a “[low point](#).” Although the Trump administration has stopped separating immigrant families and is in the process of reuniting them due to litigation, that may change in the future.



So what are we going to do about it?

Both CoreCivic and GEO Group are publicly-traded companies, and shareholders can submit resolutions to try to change corporate policies. Since 2012, the Human Rights Defense Center's associate director, Alex Friedmann, who owns a small amount of stock in CoreCivic and GEO, has filed shareholder resolutions with both firms.

Among other issues, Alex's past resolutions have called on the companies to report on what they are doing to reduce incidents of [rape and sexual abuse](#) in their facilities; to [reduce the cost of phone calls](#) made by prisoners to family members; to require the companies to spend five percent of their net profit on [rehabilitative and reentry programs](#); and to require [independent audits](#) of their detention facilities.

While such activist resolutions rarely succeed, they draw attention to significant problems in private prisons and expose their reluctance to remedy those problems.

Alex has personal experience with for-profit prisons, having served six years in a then-CCA operated facility in the 1990s prior to his release in 1999. He is now a national expert on the private prison industry. Just [Google](#) his name and “private prisons.”

This year he has introduced resolutions with both CoreCivic and GEO to prohibit the companies from housing any immigrant children separated from their parents and immigrant parents separated from their children.

Draft copies of the resolutions are posted [here](#) (for CoreCivic) and [here](#) (for GEO).

By prohibiting the nation's two largest companies that operate immigration detention centers from housing immigrant families, whether separated or not, we hope to dramatically alter how ICE and the Trump administration handle family detention going forward.



We also hope to directly impact CoreCivic and GEO Group's business operations. Immigrant detention is big business; both companies engage in [extensive lobbying](#) on the federal level to obtain and retain lucrative contracts. CoreCivic receives around 25 percent of its gross revenue from ICE, while GEO receives almost 20 percent.

Simply put, we believe that incarcerating people for the purpose of generating corporate profit is immoral and unethical.

So what does the shareholder resolution process entail?

The shareholder resolution process is very scripted. Resolutions must relate to a relevant shareholder concern and can be no more than 500 words. After a resolution is submitted, the company can file objections with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to have the resolution excluded from its proxy materials – information sent to stockholders in advance of annual shareholder meetings.

The shareholder filing the resolution can respond, and the SEC then issues a letter stating the company can either exclude the resolution (take “no action”), or the resolution meets the requirements to be presented to shareholders and thus should be allowed to proceed.

Alex already has counsel to handle the SEC process. While shareholder resolutions generally cannot address issues related to a company's “ordinary business operations,” there are exceptions for “significant policy” issues. He will argue that the separation of immigrant children from their parents is a significant policy issue that trumps the ordinary business exclusion. GEO and CoreCivic will likely argue otherwise.

If the resolutions are cleared by the SEC, they will then be included in proxy materials for both CoreCivic and GEO Group, and will be presented for a vote at the next annual shareholder meetings. The meetings will be held around May or June of 2019.

Prior to the shareholder meetings, the Human Rights Defense Center will coordinate a campaign to target and pressure the largest owners of stock in CoreCivic and GEO – institutional investors like the Vanguard Group, Blackrock, Inc., State Street Corp. and Fidelity. Mailings will be made to all investors, as well as proxy advisory services like ISS and Glass Lewis, to urge them to vote in favor of the resolutions.

For a list of the largest private prison investors, click [here](#) for CoreCivic and [here](#) for GEO Group. The resolutions were filed with both companies as of Nov. 27, 2018.

What will the funds be used for?

The main expenses in this campaign will be mailing materials in support of the resolutions to all CoreCivic and GEO Group shareholders; that process is handled by a third-party company, which charges to conduct the mailings. Any excess funds will be used to cover staff expenses and to support the Human Rights Defense Center's work on behalf of people held in detention facilities in the United States.

About the Human Rights Defense Center

The Human Rights Defense Center (www.humanrightsdefensecenter.org) is based in Lake Worth, Florida, with satellite offices in Nashville, TN; Seattle, WA; and Washington, D.C. HRDC's mission is to advocate for the rights of people held in prisons, jails and other detention facilities, including immigrant detention centers. HRDC was founded in 1990 and has 18 full-time employees, including four staff attorneys.



In addition to advocacy, we engage in litigation, book publishing and publishing our monthly magazines, [Prison Legal News](#) and [Criminal Legal News](#). We are engaged in a number of projects related to criminal justice reform and oppose the privatization of correctional services by for-profit companies. See, for example, our websites on the [private prison industry](#) and [Stop Prison Profiteering](#).

If you'd like more information on what we do, please check out our past [annual reports](#), or articles like [this one](#) or [this one](#). Thanks!

**[You can also donate directly to the Human Rights Defense Center:
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