

Safer Deportation Practices and Private Prisons

Week 4 (March 23-29)

This week, President Obama is scheduled to meet with Pope Francis. We hope and pray that immigration reform will be a topic of discussion, particularly in light of the historic trip Pope Francis took to Lampedusa and his focus on the suffering of migrants. Pope Francis clearly stated that we are all responsible for the globalization of indifference and that we are called to stop unjust systems that harm our brothers and sisters that are more vulnerable than us. We pray that President Obama sees the small, but meaningful steps that could be taken to make our deportation practices safer. Additionally, this week we pray for those members of Congress who receive excessive funds from private prisons.

Isaiah 1:13-17

Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations- I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

The Impact of Bad Deportation Practices on Migrants

The evening “Angela,” a woman in her early thirties, arrived at the shelter for women and children in Nogales, Mexico she was desperate to reunite with her husband “Tino” with whom she had traveled North two weeks before. The couple traversed the Sonora desert together and crossed the border successfully, but were picked up at a Border Patrol checkpoint in Arizona only days after entering the United States. The pair was separated upon apprehension and that was the last Angela saw of her husband. Angela described her husband to other migrants and service providers. It was then that she received the awful news that he had been deported three days before her at 3:00AM in the morning and had been murdered. From what Angela was able to ascertain, Tino was among a group of migrants deported in the early morning hours by DHS. In hopes of finding a safe place to stay for the remainder of the night, he walked several miles from the deportation site to a shelter for deported migrants. The shelter, like all other service providers in Nogales, Sonora, closes its doors at 9:00PM in light of the precarious and evolving security situation in the town. Tragically, Tino’s body was found mere feet from the doorstep of the shelter when shelter staff opened their doors in the morning. He had been murdered during the night, targeted for unknown reasons by criminals. Angela was inconsolable, terrified and desperate, unable to conceptualize her next steps, let alone a lifetime without Tino.

Information on Private Prisons:

Major Private Prison/Detention Center Corporations:

Corrections Corporation of America

Campaign Finance: Spent \$5.2 mill. since 1990; \$400,000 (2011-2013);

91% of donations to Republicans (2013)

Lobbying: Spent \$19 mill. since 1990; \$2.6 mill. (2011-2013)

GEO Group

Campaign Finance: Spent \$4.6 mill. since 1990; \$400,000 (2011-2013);

Lobbying: Spent \$3 mill. since 1990; \$700,000 (2011-2013)

CCA acknowledges the need to expand the market: “(o)ur growth is generally dependent upon our ability to obtain new contracts to develop and manage new correctional and detention facilities.”

(2012 <http://ir.correctionscorp.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=117983&p=irol-reportsannual>)

Justice For Immigrants-Focused Catholic Congresspersons Receiving Funding from CCA and/or GEO

(does not include funding from other private prisons, such as the Management Training Corporation)

H. Cuellar, Dem. TX-28, \$27,000 2012-2014

J. Boehner, Rep. OH-8: \$24,000 in 2012-2014

T. Ryan, Dem. OH-13, \$12,500 in 2012-2014 (CCA)

M. McCaul, Rep. TX-10 \$1,000 in 2013 (#7 for GEO)

P. Tiberi, Rep. OH- 12, \$1,000 in 2013 (#7 for GEO)

S. Brooks, Rep. IN-5, \$1,000 in 2012 (GEO)

Legislative Asks Regarding Private Prisons

1. End the bed quota, which requires 34,000 detainees per day, from appropriations language
2. Don't let money from private prisons influence voting to respect and care for immigrants
 - a. Ex.: Don't increase border security and militarization
 - b. Ex. Significantly decrease rather than increase detentions and deportations
3. If already a recipient of funds: refuse future money from private prisons

To Learn More About Private Prisons:

CCA: <http://influenceexplorer.com/organization/corrections-corp-of-america/46a43aff0a6743c59fbeb588e8ee743?cycle=2014>

GEO: <http://influenceexplorer.com/organization/geo-group/7dfa33488aad4908ac1c75336c20db05?cycle=2014>

Congresspersons, etc. www.opensecrets.org

Articles: <http://grassrootsleadership.org/blog/2013/07/who-house-cashing-immigrant-detention> <http://www.thenation.com/article/173120/how-private-prisons-game-immigration-system>

Priorities for Making Deportation Practices Safer

To read more about these recommendations, view our [one-page recommendations](#).

1. End all night-time deportations
2. End family separation during the deportation process
3. Do not deport individuals to particularly dangerous locations
4. Return all belongings prior to deportation
5. Provide prior notification to Mexican authorities of people with special needs
6. Provide opportunities for border NGO input

A Prayer from Pope Francis

Quoted from Pope Francis homily on the Island of Lampedusa: "The Globalization of Indifference"

O Lord, in this Liturgy, a Liturgy of repentance, we ask forgiveness for the indifference towards so many brothers and sisters, we ask forgiveness for those who are pleased with themselves, who are closed in on their own well-being in a way that leads to the anesthesia of the heart, we ask you, Father, for forgiveness for those who with their decisions at the global level have created situations that lead to these tragedies. Forgive us, Lord!

O Lord, even today let us hear your questions: "Adam, where are you?" "Where is the blood of your brother?" Amen.

For Reflection:

Pope Francis has said we are all responsible for a globalization of indifference. In broad terms, how does that apply to immigration reform?

This week's theme takes us to a different place in our discussions. We are somewhat-to-very aware of the migrants in our own communities; but, unless we live in the Southwest, we're probably not mindful of those crossing onto the US on a daily/nightly basis, nor familiar with the private prisons being funded for the purpose of detaining them. As a first step in remedying such uninformed indifference, how will you learn more?