

## Answers to the Most Common Criticisms of Contract Detention/Correctional Service Providers

***1. Contract service providers profit from the separation of families at the U.S. southwest border and manage facilities holding migrant children in cages that can be described as ‘concentration camps’***

- **The reference to facilities with cages relates to chain-link fencing used to separate rooms at U.S. Border Patrol holding stations on the southwest border.**
- **The GEO Group has never managed any border patrol holding stations or any HHS shelter facilities that house unaccompanied minors, including those who may have been separated from their parents or legal guardians.**
- **Further, GEO does not have any contracts with or provide any services to the U.S. Border Patrol or HHS and has played no role in the separation of families.**
- **The ICE Processing Centers operated by GEO do not have any chain-link fencing in housing areas and provide high quality services, including around-the-clock medical care, that comply with performance-based standards set by the federal government and guidelines set by leading third-party accreditation agencies.**
- **In 2014, at the direction of President Barack Obama’s Administration, GEO transitioned a company-owned and managed Processing Center in Karnes City, Texas to accommodate parents being cared for together with their children.**
- **Until early 2019, the Karnes Residential Center provided educational programming, around-the-clock medical care, visitation facilities, and a range of recreational options, including an indoor gymnasium, artificial turf soccer fields, covered pavilion playgrounds, and picnic areas, to families under our care.**
- **Currently, the Karnes Center has been transitioned to primarily an adult female only population.**
- **Our dedicated employees are proud of our company’s record in managing ICE Processing Centers with high-quality, culturally responsive services in safe and humane environments.**

**2. *Contract service providers have contributed to ‘mass incarceration’ by lobbying federal and state lawmakers for tougher prosecution and sentencing policies.***

- **Only the courts, who carry out state and federal laws, decide who will be incarcerated.**
- **Contracted facilities comprised less than 7% (146,000) of the total number of individuals incarcerated (2.2 million) at the federal, state and local levels at year-end 2016, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics; which excludes reentry centers, ICE processing centers and US Marshals detention facilities.**
- **At the Federal level, it was during the years of the Democratic Clinton Administration (1992 to 2000) that “Get-Tough-on-Crime” laws were passed. The increase in criminal prosecutions that followed did not lead to the development of any contracted federal correctional facilities for U.S. citizens.**
- **Instead, the private sector’s involvement has been limited to providing the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) with new capacity for the increasing number of criminal aliens (non-US citizens) convicted of federal felony crimes.**
- **At the State level, starting in the 1970’s, there was significant U.S. population migration from the north to the south, which increased the population in the Sunbelt states (from Florida to California) almost 100% by 2010.**
- **As a result, state prisons became increasingly overcrowded which resulted in Federal courts requiring expanded prison capacity in the Sunbelt states, where most contract facilities are now located.**
- **At neither the Federal nor State level have contract service providers advocated for increased correctional capacity, or stricter sentencing guidelines.**
- **Today, at the Federal level, contract facilities are almost exclusively confined to housing the increasing number of criminal aliens (non-US citizens). Presently, out of the BOP’s total inmate population of 183,830 only 10% (18,458) are held in contracted facilities, and less than 750 are US citizens.**
- **At the state level, contract facilities provided critically needed capacity that was mandated by Federal court orders concerning Sunbelt states whose populations had increased 100% from 1970 to 2010.**

**3. *Contract correctional service providers unfairly profit from people's misery in being incarcerated.***

- **Only the courts, who carry out state and federal laws, decide who will be incarcerated. Contract correctional service providers have deliberately stayed out of the public debate regarding offender sentencing and potential reforms.**
- **Contract correctional service companies often provide newer facilities, with improved rehabilitation programs and better living conditions. With respect to GEO facilities:**
  - 95% of GEO's facilities are less than 25 years old, compared with 33% of all state correctional facilities in the United States that are less than 25 years old
  - 100% of GEO's facilities are air-conditioned
  - 100% of the 800 academic and vocational classrooms in GEO's facilities have electronic Smartboards for interactive computer assisted curriculum
  - 17 GEO facilities provide the "GEO Continuum of Care" with additional rehabilitation staffing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
  - Average daily attendance in 2017: 24,000+ in Vocational Programs and 12,000+ in Academic Programs
  - 2,615 high school equivalency degrees were awarded in 2017, along with 7,814 vocational certifications
  - 100% of ICE Processing Centers and BOP Correctional Facilities managed by GEO have artificial turf soccer fields
  - 100% of GEO's facilities have flat screen TVs in the day-room areas
- **The contract correctional service providers must be for-profit organizations, in order to access financial institutions to provide funding for new state or federal facilities, which individually cost several tens of millions of dollars.**
- **Contract correctional facilities are logical counterparts to government correctional facilities, just as charter schools are logical counterparts to public schools and private hospitals are logical counterparts to government hospitals.**

***4. Contract correctional service providers do not care about rehabilitation programs because their business model relies on having more people in prison.***

- **Contract correctional service providers have been at the forefront of developing innovative partnerships with government agencies across the United States and overseas.**
- **The GEO Continuum of Care (CoC) integrates enhanced in-custody rehabilitation, including cognitive behavioral treatment, with post-release support services to address the basic needs of released individuals, including transitional housing, clothing, food, transportation, and job placement assistance.**
- **GEO has increased its commitment at the Corporate level with \$10 million annually in support of the CoC, representing 7% of GEO's 2018 net income.**
- **The funding supports numerous CoC demonstration sites, as well as, the CoC Division, with subject matter experts in the areas of academic, vocational training and substance abuse programs; specialized training and research; and a dedicated post release case managers and a 24/7 Call Center.**
- **In January 2018, GEO received the "Innovation in Corrections" Award from the American Correctional Association regarding its 'GEO Continuum of Care' program at the Graceville Correctional Facility in Florida.**
- **GEO is the nation's largest operator of community reentry centers, primarily on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and several states across the country.**
- **We believe there is an important benefit for those leaving prison to be placed in a community reentry center, where they can be assisted with housing, employment, transportation, and final reintegration into their communities.**
- **We supported the recently enacted First Step Act and its objectives to reform sentencing laws and improve offender rehabilitation and community reentry.**
- **We believe that additional funding should be appropriated for this purpose. The funding level that is being contemplated is inadequate to meaningfully support rehabilitation programs inside BOP facilities and community reentry centers.**

**5. *According to an August 2016 report from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General, contract facilities were less safe and less secure than comparable Bureau of Prisons facilities.***

- **A detailed analysis of the OIG Report revealed that the facility performance ratings used by the OIG actually indicated that contract facilities were, in fact, comparably as safe and secure as government-run prisons. The ‘apples-to-oranges’ study compared 14 low-security BOP facilities with 12% criminal aliens, to 14 low-security contracted facilities with 96% criminal aliens.**
- **The OIG Report indicated that the contract facilities were in many respects actually safer by having lower monthly rates per 10,000 beds in the following important safety indicators:**
  - Rate of deaths in custody (Contract: 54 vs. BOP: 127);
  - drug confiscations;
  - inmate fights;
  - suicides;
  - disruptive behavior incidents;
  - uses of force;
  - overall inmate grievances;
  - medical and dental grievances;
  - grievances in Special Housing Units;
  - positive drug tests;
  - guilty findings on inmate sexual misconduct against inmates; and
  - allegations of staff sexual misconduct against inmates.

**6. *Contract facilities operate with minimal accountability.***

- **Contracted facilities, in fact, operate with significant levels of accountability and transparency. Unlike government-run facilities, contract facilities provide greater accountability because they are governed by detailed contracts and typically have on-site, full-time contract monitors employed by the government.**
- **Additionally, the contracted facilities are reviewed and audited by government agencies, both on a routine and unannounced basis, as well as by third-party accreditation entities like the American Correctional Association and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care.**

**7. *Contract correctional service providers cut corners to enhance their bottom line by employing less staff, paying lower wages, and providing less training than government-operated facilities.***

- **Contracts governing privately operated facilities include minimum staffing requirements that must be strictly followed by the contract service providers who are subject to strict oversight financial penalties for failure to comply.**
- **Contracted state facilities offer competitive wage and benefit packages to their employees in order to successfully recruit and retain qualified staff. Contracted federal facilities fall under the Service Contract Act which requires wage rates set by the U.S. Department of Labor and typically exceed local market rates.**
- **The training requirements for employees in contracted correctional facilities and detention centers mirror the training requirements for government employees in comparable government operated facilities.**

**8. *The contracting of correctional facilities has not resulted in the promised cost savings for taxpayers.***

- **The government's own financial data clearly underscores the savings provided by contractor-run facilities to the taxpayers.**
- **At the federal level, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) 2016 Per Capita Cost Report shows that low security government-run institutions cost \$87.41 per day, per inmate, compared to \$68.19 per day for contracted facilities. The BOP Per Capita Cost Report reflects a 22% cost savings for contracted facilities over the most comparable low security federal prisons.**
- **The October 2014 GAO Report on Immigration Detention stated that the median daily cost for an ICE Service Processing Center was about \$200 while the median daily cost at Contract Detention Facilities was about \$120. Contracted ICE facilities reflect a 40% cost savings to taxpayers.**
- **At the state level, contracted facility cost savings required by state law include: Florida (7%), Kentucky (10%), Mississippi (10%), Ohio (5%) and Texas (10%).**

**9. *Contract service providers engage in forced labor practices while not paying inmates and detainees minimum wages.***

- **All detainees and inmates in contracted facilities are compensated in accordance with state or federal law.**
- **Contract service providers do not determine the compensation.**
- **In all cases, the detainee/inmate wage rates paid in contracted facilities are identical to those paid in comparable government facilities.**