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AFSC Recommendations on Private Prisons in Arizona

Recent media reports have revealed the influence of the for-profit prison industry in the Governor's office and have suggested that these corporations were behind SB1070, Arizona's controversial immigration bill, which, if fully implemented, would likely have led to an increase in the number of immigrants held in ICE detention facilities in Arizona, the majority of which are operated by Corrections Corporation of America.

In These Times:

http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/6085/ties_that_bind_arizona_politicians_and_the_private_prison_industry/

http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/6084/corporate_con_game

Prison Legal News: https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/22734_displayArticle.aspx

NPR: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130833741>

There is further evidence that SB1070 is just one example of for-profit prison corporations influencing Arizona legislation. Some reports suggest that this influence is much more widespread and has existed literally for decades.

Institute for Money in State Politics:

<http://www.followthemoney.org/press/Reports/200605021.pdf>

All this begs for a serious reexamination of the increasing role and lack of accountability of privately run incarceration and detention in our state of Arizona.

Recommendations include the following actions:

1. Permanently cancel the RFP for 5,000 new private beds
2. Impose an immediate moratorium on new prison construction
3. Pass state legislation that enacts strict oversight and reporting requirements for all private prisons located in or contracted with the state of Arizona, including:
 - a. Require immediate notification to local and state authorities of a major incident that threatens the health and safety of the prisoners, staff, or the public.
 - b. Allow state inspectors to enter the facility at any time
 - c. Prohibit accepting high security prisoners, prisoners convicted of class 1 or 2 felonies, or prisoners with a history of escape, assaults on staff or other inmates, or rioting
 - d. Require information about any prisoners prior to their arrival in the facility, including their names and identifying information, the crime for which they are incarcerated, and the state or federal entity that convicted and sentenced them

- e. Require all privately operated prisons in Arizona to provide the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Corrections with a monthly report on the change in the prisoner count and capacity of the facility and information on their staffing levels
- f. Require all privately operated prisons in Arizona to make publicly available their annual budgets
- g. Report all assaults, disturbances, deaths and hospitalizations
- h. Require all prisons in Arizona —both publicly and privately operated—to report their recidivism rate annually. These figures should be made available to the public

A Call for investigation

In addition, we are calling for an investigation by the Secretary of State and the Attorney General of Arizona into:

1. Campaign contributions to Arizona candidates, elected officials, and ballot proposition campaigns from the for-profit prison industry
2. Expense reimbursement policies of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and for-profit prison corporations to Arizona legislators, pursuant to ARS 41-1232.03; ‘Expenditure reporting; public bodies and public lobbyists; gifts’
3. ALEC’s status as a non-profit organization
4. The role of lobbyists or other for-profit prison industry representatives in the creation of specific legislation in Arizona, including ALEC’s model legislation

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