

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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Worse When Poor Too

Everything in this country has a connection to making money, as we see from this notice in the November *San Quentin News*: "CoreCivic and GEO Group, the prison industry's two largest publicly traded companies, are creating new revenue by signing deals known as intergovernmental agreements with cities and counties. The agreements permit the transfer of federal prisoners from local law enforcement to private detention facilities."

Leavenworth Detention Facility, 30 miles from Kansas City, a for-profit run by Core Civic, has a contract with the U.S. Marshals Service, set to expire in December. Some people who work at CoreCivic think the Leavenworth facility could wind up housing immigration detainees. There's no right to counsel for immigration detainees.

Which brings us to the Haitian asylum seekers whipped by U.S. Border Patrol agents on horseback as they waded across the Rio Grande into Texas in September. Most of the Haitian asylum seekers were deported, but some are still being held in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), jails. Approximately 45 are currently being held at the Torrance County Detention Facility in Estancia, New Mexico, about an hour southeast of Albuquerque. This for-profit prison, owned and operated by CoreCivic, not only houses male detainees for ICE and the U.S. Marshals Service, but also female and male detainees for Torrance County.

The asylum seekers there are subjected to abuse and medical neglect. They have had limited access to legal services and requests to be released to stay with family members or sponsors while their cases are resolved have been denied. This jail actually failed its annual government inspection over severe understaffing, unsanitary and other unsafe conditions. Those held there had no lawyers for two months. Now that they do, there are many complaints registered about poor food, water that gave everyone rashes, staff treatment, medical neglect, anxiety, depression and weight loss.

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In addition, asylum cases are very legally complicated. And yet, their lawyers were delayed for well over a month before they were finally able to talk with their imprisoned clients in November. At which time it had not yet been explained to their imprisoned clients even what "asylum" was.

Asylum is the legal right of people to seek protection from persecution in their home countries. To seek asylum in the United States, a claimant must show persecution based on race, religion, nationality or membership in a particular social or political group. At the moment, the majority of migrants are unable to claim asylum because of Title 42, an order of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) which authorizes their immediate expulsion. The definition of asylum currently being used has worked against Haitian migrants who, suffer from a historical prejudice that they are "economic migrants" and not asylum seekers.

Because of the border closures during the Trump administration (and still continuing) and the pandemic, by the end of 2020, there were less than a dozen people inside of the Torrance County Detention Facility. This meant an enormous loss of profit to its corporate owner, CoreCivic.

According to Allegra Love, one of the detainees' lawyers: "Now, we are watching the Biden administration repopulate this rural detention center with immigrants and it is hard not to conclude that this is to bolster corporate profit. Torrance failed their inspection this summer—an extremely difficult thing to do. Most facilities actually pass their inspections and Torrance failed."

CoreCivic has more than 100 facilities across the United States. In New Mexico they have facilities in Cibola and Torrance counties, as well as in Grants, Albuquerque and Los Lunas.

Resources

Haitian Bridge Alliance, 4265 Fairmount Ave. Suite 280, San Diego CA 92105, 949-295-1253

El Paso Immigration Collaborative, PO Box 8009, Santa Fe NM 87504, 505-490-2789

PFIZER Y MODERNA GANAN MILLONES DE \$\$\$

Los ocho principales accionistas de Pfizer y Moderna ganaron más de diez mil millones de dólares la primera semana de diciembre. Fue gracias al rápido aumento del valor de las acciones tras el hallazgo de la nueva variantes del coronavirus a menos que los países ricos y los fabricantes de vacunas se esfuercen mas para revertir la inequidad en el acceso a las vacunas. Las empresas que sacan el máximo provecho de la situación hacen lo mínimo para transferir su tecnología. Su prioridad es generar enormes cantidades de dinero para algunas de las personas más ricas del mundo.

THE LEAST READ PART OF THE NEWSLETTER

To receive the *CPR Newsletter* by postal mail monthly, send us a self-addressed stamped envelope for each month's issue you are requesting, up to 12 at one time. Put the *CPR* return address in the upper left-hand corner of each envelope you send us.

Five pages (1 ounce), can be sent for one Forever stamp. Ten pages (2 ounces) can be sent for a twenty-cent stamp more.

Please continue to send us address changes, as soon as you can, including both your old and new addresses, to help us keep our mailing list current and accurate.

NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS. Letters sent us marked "Legal Mail" are NOT going to a lawyer, and could possibly result in our losing our access to the prisons they come from. *PLEASE* don't do it! No matter how desperately you need legal advice/assistance, we DO NOT have any.

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons project, which posts our *Newsletter* on-line, monthly, for free downloading and distribution. All issues since 2009 are at its great site: realcostofprisons.org

MORE LAW BREAKERS

Of the 41 arrests this year of federal Justice Department personnel, 28 were federal Bureau of Prison employees or contractors. Two-thirds of the criminal cases against Justice Department personnel in recent years have involved federal prison workers, who account for less than one-third of the department's workforce. More than 100 federal prison workers have been arrested, convicted or sentenced for crimes since the start of 2019, including a warden indicted for sexual abuse, an associate warden charged with murder, and guards taking cash to smuggle in drugs and weapons.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

On December 10, 1948, the United Nations established the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaiming, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected. This document has served as a foundation in the UN's efforts to abolish executions, citing "equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family" and "the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Since then, 128 countries have abolished executions, bringing the total number of such countries to 144. However, executions are still legal in the U.S. (both federally and in 24 states) as is the death sentence of Life Without the Possibility of Parole.

Witness to Innocence (1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia PA 19102, 215-519-4384) is the only national organization in the U.S. composed of and led by exonerated death row survivors and their family members. Its mission is to abolish executions by empowering its members to become effective leaders in the abolition movement. They actively challenge political leaders and the public to grapple with the reality of a fatally flawed police, court and penal system that sends innocent people to death row. We also seek ways to support death row survivors and their loved ones as they confront the challenges of life after exoneration.

Rather than pay more

A federal jury recently ruled that immigration detainees who cook, clean, do laundry and cut hair for a \$1 a day, at the immigration center in Tacoma Washington, were entitled to Washington state's minimum wage of \$13.69 an hour. Geo Group, which owns the for profit jail was ordered to pay more than \$23 million in back pay and unjust profits due to the detainees.

However, rather than do so, the Florida-based Geo Group suspended the "Voluntary Work Program" while it appeals.

A former worker commented: "It's gotten really gross—nobody cleans anything."

A few James Baldwin Quotes for all Seasons:

> Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor.

> Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

> Please try to remember that what they believe, as well as what they do and cause you to endure, does not testify to your inferiority, but to their inhumanity.