

August 5, 2021

Governor Gavin Newsom  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attorney General Rob Bonta  
1300 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Conditions in Immigration Detention Facilities**

Dear Governor Newsom and Attorney General Bonta:

We are reaching out to your respective offices to highlight our ongoing concern with regard to the situation of immigrants in detention in California. As you are aware the COVID-19 pandemic has presented serious challenges to protecting the health and safety of individuals in detention facilities. We commend California's longstanding commitment to immigrants rights but in the face of continued outbreaks and otherwise preventable deaths, we believe that the state of California can and should do more to protect the lives of those detained in immigrant detention facilities in our state.

Accompanying this letter please find a report detailing the conditions of confinement in the detention facilities throughout the state, including specific examples of ongoing violations of California state law. The report includes a sample survey as well as testimony from individuals inside detention facilities. Lastly the report provides specific policy recommendations to your respective offices to seek justice and accountability with respect to these facilities.

Although these facilities are used to detain individuals in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), seven of the eight facilities are owned and operated by private prison corporations, who are subject to California state laws requiring them to meet minimum standards of care. The eighth facility is the Yuba County Jail which is subject to oversight from the Board of State and Community Corrections.

Therefore we believe that it is appropriate for the state of California to exercise proactive oversight in these facilities, in order to protect the health and safety of those in detention. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has found that this type of oversight is lawful and appropriate under the state's police powers. *See* U.S. v. California, 921 F.3d 865, 886 (9th Cir. 2019) and *The Geo Group, Inc. v. Newsom*, 19-2491 (S.D. Cal., Oct. 8, 2020)

We kindly request to meet with your staff in order to discuss the report and how we can partner to find solutions to the challenges posed by these facilities.

Respectfully,

Jackie Gonzalez  
Policy Director  
Immigrant Defense Advocates

Bianca Sierra Wolff  
Executive Director  
California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice

Richard Diaz  
Staff Attorney  
Disability Rights California

Organizational Sign-ons in Support

1. Alianza Sacramento
2. American Friends Service Committee- US-Mexico Border Program
3. API Equality-LA
4. Bend the Arc
5. California LULAC
6. California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
7. California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
8. CALMA (Collective Action for Laborers, Migrants & Asylum Seekers)
9. Campaign for Immigrant Detention Reform (CIDR)
10. Central American Resource Center -CARECEN- of California
11. Central American Students Association at Harvard
12. Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (CGRS)
13. Centro Binacional Para El Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO)
14. Centro Legal de la Raza
15. Coalition for Human Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
16. CRLA Foundation
17. Desert Support for Asylum Seekers
18. Dolores Street Community Services
19. Education and Leadership Foundation
20. Faithful Friends/Amigos fieles
21. Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement
22. Freedom for Immigrants
23. Haitian Bridge Alliance
24. Human Rights First
25. Immigrant Legal Defense

26. IMPORTA Santa Barbara
27. Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
28. Jewish Coalition Assisting Refugees & Immigrants - Los Angeles
29. Jewish Family & Community Services - East Bay
30. Kern Welcoming and Extending Solidarity to Immigrants
31. Korean Community Center of the East Bay
32. La Raza Community Resource Center
33. Law Office of Helen Lawrence
34. Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition
35. Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice
36. Monument Impact
37. Mi Familia Vota
38. Mujeres Unidas y Activas
39. NorCal Resist
40. North Bay Rapid Response Network: Napa, Solano and Sonoma Counties
41. Pangea Legal Services
42. Public Law Center
43. Removal Defense Clinic, Southwestern Law School
44. Reiki Center of the East Bay
45. SALVA
46. Silicon Valley De-Bug
47. Secure Justice
48. SIREN (Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network)
49. SOLACE in San Diego
50. VIDAS Legal Services (North Bay)