



DIVEST from Prisons, REINVEST in Humanity

City of Oakland Prison Divestment Campaign

“Oakland has been one of the leading cities in the United States in establishing progressive socially and environmentally responsible investment policies”

- Recommendation from Oakland Councilmember Dan Kalb to adopt Fossil Fuel Divestment Resolution, May 29, 2014

WHY DIVEST?

1. Private Prisons lobby for criminalization and incarceration

Private prisons play a significant role in prison growth. Since 2002, private prison companies like Corrections Corporation of America and GEO Group have spent over \$50 million on lobbying Congress, and on campaign contributions to elected politicians.¹ Private prisons are behind laws like three strikes, mandatory minimums, and truth-in-sentencing, all designed to push more people of color into prisons, and keep them there for longer.² Private prisons are also behind immigrant detention policies like the Detention Bed Quota, and family detention. As a result, we have more people in prison not because crime has gone up, but because there is a profit incentive.

2. Oakland communities are harmed by policies lobbied for by the private prison industry

The prison industry is adapting and expanding in order to incarcerate more of our families and community members, especially targeting people of color. While African Americans make up 13% of the US population, they are 40% of the incarcerated population. Among women in prison, an astounding 50% are black. Immigrants in detention are overwhelmingly black and brown. The majority of Oaklanders are either black, immigrants, or both, making the Oakland community a primary target for incarceration policies that actively promote structural racism.

- 10% or about 13,000 people incarcerated in California are now held in private prisons³

¹ What Does Millions in Lobbying Money Buy? Five Congresspeople in the Pocket of the Private Prison Industry, The Nation, Lee Fang and Francis Reynolds, 2/27/13.

<http://www.thenation.com/article/what-does-millions-lobbying-money-buy-five-congresspeople-pocket-private-prison-indus/>

² Presumed guilty: How prisons profit off the ‘war on drugs,’ MSNBC, Ari Melber, 10/14/13.

<http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/presumed-guilty-how-prisons-profit-the>

³ California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Monthly Report of Population 7/31/15,

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch/Monthly/TPOP1A/TPOP1Ad1507.pdf

- Oakland residents who fall into ICE custody are often transferred to the Mesa Verde Detention Center in Bakersfield, and at the Adelanto Detention Facility, both of which are owned by Geo Group and which have a combined capacity of 2,340 people per day.⁴ Every day, approximately 155 Alameda County residents are being detained by ICE in private, for profit facilities.⁵
- Oakland residents are often incarcerated in private prisons, and sentenced under laws lobbied for by the private prison industry. There are 16 private prisons, jails, and re-entry facilities operating in California today. 10% or about 13,000 Californians are now held in private prisons.⁶ This means that approximately 540 Alameda County residents are currently incarcerated at private for-profit prisons. Even more tragic, as a result of prison overcrowding over half of these people are being incarcerated at private for-profit prisons run by CCA in states as far as Oklahoma, Mississippi, and Arizona.
- Sexual abuse, delayed medical care, inadequate food, beatings and other abusive treatment are rampant in private prisons.^{7 8}

3. The money flowing into private prisons is 100% public funds, our funds

Prison companies are reimbursed approximately \$120 per person, per day by state, federal, and local governments. Governor Jerry Brown's 2015 budget includes \$12.7 billion for prisons (public and private), compared to approximately \$3 billion for the University of California system. How many teachers could \$12.7 billion support? How many people could access healthcare or housing with \$12.7 billion? California is the second largest client to the private prison giant Corrections Corporation of America, after the federal government. Nationally, we are spending \$75 billion per year on incarceration. We are calling for Reinvestment in Humanity, not in more cages.

⁴ <http://www.geogroup.com/locations>

⁵ <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/2012/09/19/immigration-detention-in-california-backounder>

⁶ [1] California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Monthly Report of Population 7/31/15, http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch/Monthly/TPOP1A/TPOP1Ad1507.pdf

⁷ *Stop Detaining Immigrants at Adelanto*, The Hill, Christina Fiahlo, 7/20/2015.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/judicial/248362-stop-detaining-immigrants-at-adelanto>

⁸ *Private Prison Operator Set To Rake In \$17 Million With New 400-Bed Detention Center*, Think Progress, Esther Yu-Hsi Lee, 3/25/2015.

<http://thinkprogress.org/immigration/2015/03/25/3638670/geo-group-bakersfield-ca-detention-center/>

FACTSHEET on Oakland Divestment Campaign

Our Demand: DIVEST FROM PRISONS, REINVEST IN HUMANITY!

The City of Oakland should immediately halt any new investments in both private prison corporations Corrections Corporation of America and GEO Group, as well as any Million Shares Club member, and should allow existing short-term investments to expire, and divest from medium-term investments as soon as possible. Our public money should be used for the public good, investing in schools, community services, and health, not in caging our people and destroying our families.

Our Strategy

Oakland can be one of the first wave of cities that are preparing to lead the way for divesting public funds from the private prison industry and reinvesting in humanity. The importance of divestment is twofold:

1. Divestment from prison corporations **Corrections Corporation of America (CCA)** and **GEO Group** politically isolates prison corporations and creates the political will to end the era of incarceration for profit. Large-scale divestment will weaken CCA and GEO financially, limiting their ability to keep lobbying for more incarceration, and their ability to build more prisons.
2. Divestment from the “**Million Shares Club**” quickly pressure Million Shares corporations to create investment screens that do not allow investment in private prisons. The “Million Shares Club” is made up of financial institutions that lend money to prisons, lobby for prisons, and are key culprits in propping up the private prison industry.

“**Million Shares Club**” members are 30 publicly-traded companies which hold more than one million shares in the private prison corporations Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and GEO Group. These are the same companies who share lobbyists with private prisons and contribute to pro-incarceration politicians, since their financial future is now also tied to mass incarceration.

Oakland’s Investments

As of March 2015, the City of Oakland has \$17 million dollars invested in Invesco and \$2 million invested in the Bank of New York Mellon. This is 3% of the city’s total investments. Both Invesco and the Bank of New York Mellon are part of the “Million Shares Club.”

Who has the power?

- The Oakland City Council, made up of the mayor, 7 council members elected by district, and 1 at-large council member, is responsible for making investment/divestment decisions.

- Mayor Libby Schaaf
- Council District 1 - Dan Kalb (sponsored Fossil Fuel Divestment in 2014)
- Council District 2 - Abel J. Guillen (As Trustee at Peralta Community College, led move of College investments to local banks)
- Council District 3 - Lynette Gibson McElhaney (Advocate for housing and economic opportunity in low-income neighborhoods)
- Council District 4 - Annie Campbell Washington
- Council District 5 - Noel Gallo
- Council District 6 - Desley Brooks (Former public defender, leading push for Department of Race and Equity)
- Council District 7 - Larry Reid
- Councilmember At Large - Rebecca Kaplan (part of Apartheid Divestment as a student)
- The Finance and Management Committee - made up of 4 Oakland city councilors (Dan Kalb, Chair, Annie Campbell Washington, Lynette Gibson McElhaney, Abel J. Guillén) - is responsible for making recommendations to the full council about investment/divestment decisions.

Precedents in Oakland

- In 2014, Dan Kalb led a process to divest from the Fossil Fuel industry.
- Oakland has the following “Social Responsibility” policy on the books: *“When possible, it is the City’s policy to invest in companies that promote the use and production of renewable energy resources and any other socially responsible investments, subject to the prudent investment standard.”* Responsible investment companies like [Sustainalytics](#) do not recommend investment in private prisons. So why is Oakland invested in the “Milion Shares Club?”

Who we are:

The Prison Divestment Campaign is a collaboration of immigrant, black, criminal justice, faith, labor, and student communities nationwide. Together we are working in a campaign that demands divestment from prisons and reinvestment in our communities. Contact amanda@enlaceintl.org if you are interested in joining the campaign. Visit Enlaceintl.org for more info.