

Money in Politics eBlast

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League of Women Voters of Boulder County



Must-Read !
Private Prisons

"Not being heard is no reason for silence."
Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, 1862

The United States has the largest prison population in the world and highest per-capita incarceration rate.(1)

From 2000 to 2016 the number of people housed in private prisons increased five times faster than the total prison population. Over a similar timeframe, the proportion of people detained in private immigration facilities increased by 442 percent.(2)

Private prison companies have increased their campaign and political spending in recent years.(3)

They have also increased their lobbying efforts spending 26.2 million since 2012. GEO Group and Core Civic, both private prison companies accounted for half that total. In 2016 and 2017 alone, 10.4 million was spent lobbying state lawmakers.(4)

Something to think about:

What is the goal of the prison system? Is to rehabilitate socially deviant individuals? To deter crimes? Punishment? Protect the public?

Why would corporations, who own private prisons feel the need to spend money on lobbying state lawmakers?

The end goal of corporations is to make a profit. In order to make a profit you need revenue. Private prisons get their revenue by the the government who supplies the prisoners. In order to stay in business these prisons need prisoners. They need a constant stream of inmates coming in to replace those who have already served their time.

Could the goal of lobbying efforts by these corporations be to ensure prisoners? Would it then be to their advantage to set policies that keep their beds filled?

Should society allow corporations to profit off of imprisoning people?

The LWVUS has published their study of privatization of prisons at: <https://www.lwv.org/privatization-prisons>

(1) <http://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison-population-total>

(2) <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/capitalizing-on-mass-incarceration-u-s-growth-in-priv>

(3) <http://observer.com/2017/10/geo-group-private-prison-industry-profits-soar-under-trump/>

(4) <https://www.followthemoney.org/>

Making Democracy Work for All
League of Women Voters of Boulder County

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