



GSO Senate Resolution 18.09

Resolution on Divestment from For-Profit Prisons

Whereas, the United States incarcerates more people and a higher percentage of its population than any other nation in the world¹;

Whereas, as of 2015 approximately 7% of state prisoners and 18% of federal prisoners were housed in for-profit prison facilities, as well as nearly three quarters of federal immigration detainees, many of whom are held without charge during their incarceration²;

Whereas, through a constant effort to maximize profits by keeping operating costs low, for-profit prisons are consistently found to be more dangerous for both inmates and guards³, have a higher rate of recidivism⁴, and are frequently found to provide inhumane living conditions for inmates⁵;

Whereas, because such entities operate so as to make a profit, for-profit prisons have actively supported legislation that serves to increase the incarceration rate as well as influence immigration policy for their own benefit, spending 45 million dollars to date on lobbying and campaign donations⁶;

Whereas, US immigration policies are currently projected to as much as quadruple the number of incarcerated immigrants and the use of for-profit prisons is expected to increase⁷;

Whereas, those affected by the aforementioned policies and legislation are sure to include members of the SU community and their families;

Whereas, as the share-holders who financially support for-profit prisons are responsible for sustaining those companies, Syracuse University and its members would therefore be complicit in the suffering and injustice caused by those entities;

Whereas, as a recognized leader in the community the University can have a positive impact on public opinion, as witnessed in the past during the divestment movement from South Africa⁸;

Whereas, other universities such as Columbia University, Georgetown University, Hampshire College and the entire University of California System have already publically committed to divestment from for-profit prisons;

Whereas, the financial viability of Syracuse University would not likely suffer major adverse effects, given that the University had no direct investments in for-profit prisons as of February 2017; and

Whereas, the expansion of mass incarceration affects many members of the Syracuse community personally and all of its members ethically, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Graduate Student Organization (GSO) of Syracuse University declares its collective support for Syracuse University to publicly commit to divesting both now and in the future from direct investments in for-profit prisons and their major suppliers; this would involve divesting from CoreCivic (CXW) and The Geo Group (GEO).

¹ http://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/wppl_10.pdf

² <https://www.aclu.org/issues/mass-incarceration/privatization-criminal-justice/private-prisons>

³ <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2016/e1606.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/ITPI-Recidivism-ResearchBrief-June2016.pdf>

⁵ https://www.aclutx.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/Warehousedreport.pdf

⁶ <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2016/aug/22/study-shows-private-prison-companies-use-influence-increase-incarceration/>

<https://www.thenation.com/article/hidden-history-alec-and-prison-labor/>

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ap-private-prisons-profit-from-illegal-immigrants/>

⁷ <http://www.citylab.com/crime/2016/11/why-private-prison-stocks-are-soaring/507626/>

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disinvestment_from_South_Africa