

**DECARCERATE - REPARATE - LIBERATE**



A Toolkit for Campus Organizers

# **Prison Divestment to Build Freedom Campuses**



## Who We Are

Enlace is an international alliance of organizations that has developed an Integrated Organizing Approach (IOA) focused on teambuilding and strategic campaigning. We use this IOA to win campaigns against transnational corporations, and build capacity of organizations through trainings and team building systems. We share this knowledge with community organizations through our advanced organizing training Institute. [enlaceintl.org](http://enlaceintl.org)



In 2011, Enlace convened the Prison Divestment Campaign to fight the devastating impacts of mass incarceration on low-income, immigrant, and Black and Brown communities. We aim to break the lobbying power of the private prison industry at all levels of government as a means to abolish the incarceration and detention systems, and build a world free of cages. More than 200 organizations nation-wide are participating in the Campaign to get our money and our community members out of the prison industrial complex. In 2017, Prison Divestment became a pillar of the Freedom Cities movement. [prisondivestment.com](http://prisondivestment.com), [freedomcities.org](http://freedomcities.org)

## Acknowledgements

This guide has been updated from a 2015 toolkit compiled by Enlace, Responsible Endowments Coalition and the Transnational Institute for Grassroots Research and Action (TIGRA) as part of the Prison Divestment Campaign.

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## Introduction

Universities invest in the prison industrial complex (PIC) through their endowments and pension funds. In other words, universities profit off of human misery and prison expansion. Students across the nation are standing up to demand their universities become Freedom Campus centers of innovation and divest from for-profit prisons and other prison profiteers that are driving mass incarceration and immigration enforcement. Prison divestment is a critical step in making entire campuses safe as we demand investments in our student communities most impacted by criminalization and oppression instead of investments in the PIC.

This toolkit provides a step-by-step guide on how you as a student body can work to dismantle the PIC by organizing a divestment campaign on your campus. **We explain why divestment is critical to overcoming the profit-driven criminal and immigration systems, and becoming a Freedom Campus. We walk through how to get your university to divest. We feature case studies on the historic divestment victories at Columbia University and California State University Los Angeles that will inform and inspire your strategy.**

GEO Group (GEO) and CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America; CCA) are drivers of the mass incarceration of people of color in the U.S., and internationally with G4S. In the U.S., these for-profit prison companies successfully lobby for policies that lock Black and Brown bodies behind bars, with our tax dollars paying companies to keep them there. With the financial assistance of their major lenders and investors on Wall Street, CCA and GEO will continue to lobby for policies that fuel mass incarceration and the mass detention of immigrants. By taking on university investments in private prisons, we are able to **strategically target a cornerstone of the PIC and move those resources into our own hands to build healthy, thriving campuses and communities.**

This toolkit is provided by the Prison Divestment Campaign, an effort coordinated by Enlace. Check [prisondivestment.com](http://prisondivestment.com) and [enlaceintl.org](http://enlaceintl.org) for more resources and reach out to the Enlace team ([info@enlaceintl.org](mailto:info@enlaceintl.org)) with questions and requests for campaigning assistance.

## What is Prison Divestment?

**We call on local institutions to divest from private prisons and their major lenders and investors.** Prison corporations perversely profit from incarceration and use their money and political influence to lobby for harsh criminal penalties and anti-immigrant legislation. They benefit directly from and work to exacerbate mass incarceration, one of the driving forces of racial inequality in America today. Private prison corporations depend upon capital from their major lenders and investors on Wall Street to fund their lobbying efforts. Our academic institutions should not invest our money in, nor profit from this system of human misery.

**Divestment is the act of selling one's assets in a company for political or social reasons. It is a way for the investor to admonish an unethical corporation by withdrawing financial assets.** The overall goals of divestment are to reduce a corporation's financial capacity to engage in business-as-usual (building and running prisons) and to publicize an injustice that a company is furthering. Divestment is an effective strategy where we want to abolish an industry rather than reform it.



University and city divestment is a way for us to pressure the big banks financing the lobbying efforts and the new construction of private prisons (who we call the Million Shares Club), the politicians with the power to cut tax breaks and contracts with private prisons, and to abolish racist criminal and immigration laws. When institutions that control significant amounts of money—like universities—divest, there is impactful media coverage that raises public awareness and exposes how big banks uphold the prison system by financing these corporations through loans and share-buying. Financial institutions will not stop financing an industry until they feel the repercussions of their investments in their profit margins and public image. Institutional divestment forces Million Shares Club lenders and investors to address their support of the prison industry publicly and cut their ties with these companies. Divesting from private prisons and the Million Shares Club will radically reduce the amount of money spent buying out politicians to further mass incarceration and immigration enforcement as well as expose them for supporting racist systems. **When we reduce the ability of the entire private prison industry to lobby for mass incarceration and immigration enforcement, we will be much closer to living in a world where people of color and immigrants are decriminalized, a world free of cages, a world of collective liberation.**

Divestment also opens the door to conversations on reinvestment, and reinforces the critical work already happening in communities for abolition of police and police-ICE collaboration, for Black Lives, for sanctuary, affordable housing, mental health services, and other work intimately tied to the decriminalization of people of color, immigrants and low-income peoples. **Prison divestment allows us to ask and answer the question: If we divested from the prison industrial complex, what community initiatives could we reimagine and invest in?**

Prison Divestment has become a pillar of the Freedom Campuses and Freedom Cities resistance movement. **Freedom Cities is an emerging movement that seeks to make campuses, cities, towns and communities safe for all oppressed people in the U.S.** Prison divestment is an accessible way for people across the country to take action against the carceral system as they demand healthy and thriving campuses and neighborhoods. It is a campaign led by directly impacted leaders who know that justice is built when everyone lives with dignity and has what they need to thrive without fear of physical violence, racial injustice, and economic oppression at the hands of greedy corporations, white supremacists or the government. Through prison divestment in the Freedom Cities and Campuses movement, we are **owning our power in our communities and rising up together as an unstoppable force that will fight for each of our own community's vision.**

**Freedom Campuses and Freedom Cities campaigns embody each of the following organizing principles:**

- **Led by directly impacted communities**
- **Pro-Black**
- **Use narratives and organizing principles that leave no marginalized community behind**
- **Shift control of resources and political power to impacted communities**
- **Deepen relationships across oppressed communities**







## Campus Prison Divestment Victories

### 2013:

- Florida Atlantic University students stop GEO Group from donating \$6 million to their university and gaining naming rights to their stadium.

### 2014:

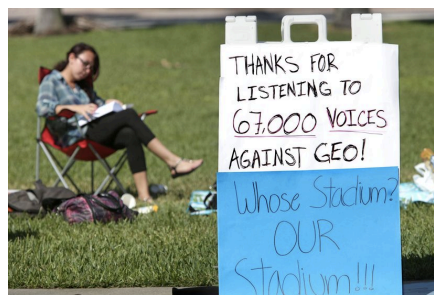
- 5 University of California student senates pass divestment resolutions.
- Gates Scholars join the Enlace-led campaign to successfully push the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Trust to dump its \$2.1 million bank loan investments in GEO.

### 2015:

- New York State United Teachers adopt a resolution to investigate current pension investments in prisons and to move immediately to divest.
- Columbia University becomes the very first university in the country to divest its endowment from the private prison industry.
- Wesleyan University announces it has no private prison holdings in response to student pressure.
- Hampshire College amends its institutional investment policy to include private prisons on a list of specific industries disfavored for investing.
- Afrikan Black Coalition [pressures](#) the University of California system—the largest endowment fund in the world—to fully divest from private prisons.

### 2016:

- California State University Los Angeles [announced that it will divest](#) from private prisons and reinvest in Black scholars and students of color.



FAU students' "Owlcatraz" campaign keeps GEO's name and money off their campus.

Photo credit: Palm Beach Post



A coalition of UC Berkeley students, led by the Afrikan Black Coalition and MEChA, stage a chain gang to educate the campus on the UC's ties to the PIC ahead of their successful student senate vote to divest.



Enlace, Gates Scholars and directly impacted Black, Latinx, and indigenous leaders delivered 11,000 signatures to Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Trust demanding they dump their GEO investments.



- Oregon Education Association, representing pre-K to 12th grade teachers, [passes a resolution](#) to push for divestment of the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) from prisons and their major investors.

## 2017:

- [University of California terminates \\$475 million worth of contracts with Wells Fargo](#) due to powerful organizing by Afrikan Black Coalition supported by Enlace.
- Oregon Senator Kathleen Taylor introduces [Senate Bill 1005 to divest](#) the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System from private prisons and the Million Shares Club, aiming to turn the Oregon Education Association's resolution into law.
- Georgetown Students for a Radically Ethical Endowment (GU F.R.E.E.) pushes Georgetown University to state that going forward [the university will not own investments in private prison companies](#) and will encourage its external investment managers to avoid investments in these companies.
- SU Prison Divest pressures Stanford University to publicly state that they have [no prison investments, and to initiate a full review of the Investment Responsibility policy and procedures](#). SU Prison Divest continues to pressure University to divest from prison investors and profiteers.
- Princeton Private Prison Divest (PPPD) pressures the university vice president to state the [endowment has not and will not invest in private prisons](#), and that a resolution to make that binding may still be brought forward.
- [University of Southern Florida Divest wins a student referendum](#) to divest the university's foundation from fossil fuels, private prisons and companies complicit in human rights violations. USF Divest continues to pressure the university president to enact the student referendum.



After a 16-month campaign, Columbia Prison Divest pressured Columbia University to divest \$10 million of their endowment from CCA and G4S. Photo credit: Columbia Prison Divest



After a multi-year campaign, Afrikan Black Coalition pressured the University of California to divest their endowment from CCA, GEO and Wells Fargo. Photo credit: Rasheed Robinson for ABC



Members of GU F.R.E.E. protesting on campus, uniting prison divest and divestment from Israeli occupation of Palestine. Photo credit: GU F.R.E.E./Facebook.



## Prison Profiteers: CoreCivic & GEO Group

The U.S.-based for-profit prison industry is dominated by two publicly-traded companies: CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America; CCA) and GEO Group (GEO) together control more than 70% of the private prison market in the U.S. In 2017, these two companies received \$4.03 billion of our taxpayer dollars for locking our community members behind bars. Since 2003, they together spent over \$52 million on lobbyists and campaign contributions to ensure that our community members would one day live inside their cages. CCA and GEO's business growth is fundamentally dependent upon lobbying strategies that place more people of color under their exploitative control more quickly. CCA and GEO lobby actively to force the criminal system to incarcerate more people—most often low-income people of color—and the immigration system to detain more people—most often low-income Black and Latino immigrants. Both have been sued for abuse of people who are incarcerated, medical neglect, forced labor, fraudulent understaffing, and fraudulent statements to their investors.



Over 160 people directly impacted by criminalization protested at GEO Group's headquarters in May 2015 at the 3rd Annual National Prison Divestment Campaign convergence. Photo credit: Enlace.



CCA profits by promoting the criminalization of immigrants and people of color. They were active in drafting, lobbying for and promoting Arizona's SB1070 and copycat laws. Photo credit: Brave New Films, Cuéntame, "Immigrants for Sale"

GEO is the largest private prison company in the U.S., and the fifth largest corrections organization in the world. GEO operates 71 correctional and detention facilities with the capacity to detain 75,365 people; 127 re-entry facilities with the capacity to detain 12,892 people; and 19 youth detention facilities with the capacity to detain 1,267 youth. GEO also contracts with the federal government to transport people in prison through its subsidiary GEO Transport, Inc. GEO's subsidiary BI, Inc. electronically shackles immigrants, making GEO a provider of both detention and "alternatives" to detention where it controls whether immigrants will re-enter detention.<sup>1</sup>

CCA is the second largest for-profit prison company in the U.S., operating 77 correctional, detention, and re-entry facilities with the ability to detain 78,000 people in 19 states. CCA owns 12 additional facilities that are leased to federal, state and local governments. CCA's subsidiary TransCor America transports prisoners between prison facilities.

CCA and GEO are not content with an increase in privatized state prisons or the expansion of immigrant detention. Constantly seeking new growth opportunities, the private prison industry has lobbied for [stricter criminal sentencing laws through their](#)

<sup>1</sup> The only ATD program funded by ICE is the Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP) II, a program requiring immigrants to wear an ankle bracelet. Since the program's inception in 2009, ISAP II has been administered by GEO subsidiary Behavioral Interventions (BI) Incorporated. In September 2015, GEO Care, LLC, another GEO subsidiary, was awarded an \$11 million-per-year contract with ICE to establish a new [case management alternative to detention initiative](#) for 1500 families released from detention.





[involvement with the American Legislative Exchange Council](#); [police force expansion](#); and state and federal laws and programs that criminalize immigrants, including [Arizona's SB1070](#) and the [Department of Homeland Security's Operation Streamline](#). GEO Group has also co-opted and commodified [Alternatives to Detention \(ATD\)](#), which is now synonymous with electronic monitoring of immigrants by private prison companies. Alarming, ATDs have become popular among politicians and some immigrant rights advocates as a "less costly" and "more humane" option than detention centers. These alternatives are shackles that dehumanize and control people, including pregnant women. The expansion of ATDs in immigration enforcement parallels the growth of for-profit probation and mental health services in the general prison industry.

Not limited to incarceration, CCA and GEO Group are setting themselves up as the "Wal-Mart" of state control and surveillance—a one stop shop for surveillance and monitoring, incarceration and detention, and "treatment." In pursuing this all-in-one model, GEO and CCA have expanded their business to run [mental health "treatment" facilities](#). Their expansion into the mental health sector creates a revolving door for many who are criminalized, and furthers their endeavor to offer false solutions that constantly seek new ways to commodify people and social problems. This is a trend some groups are calling the Treatment Industrial Complex.

Private prisons have turned the criminal system into a business where the highest bidder is rewarded and criminalization of our communities is job security. As a stipulation in their contracts for individual prisons, [CCA and GEO typically require 90% or more of prison beds to be filled](#). These contract clauses and the millions CCA and GEO spend on lobbying and campaign contributions ensure that state and federal governments work for them to create more criminals and detainable immigrants. Studies of private prisons expose that they [purposefully imprison a disproportionate number of people of color in their state facilities](#), and that [they hold people longer than public prisons](#).

CCA and GEO opened the door to privatization of the prison industry when they started operating and lobbying in the 1980s. In their quest for profit at the cost of Black and Brown lives, CCA and GEO continue to open new revolving doors to criminalization. By targeting CCA and GEO, we are strategically building a movement of communities who have been criminalized that is empowered through multiracial, multi-sector relationships and corporate-political analysis to take on the corporate drivers of policing, criminalization, incarceration and detention.

### **Money & Mass Incarceration: A Legacy of Corporate Lobbying & Racial Inequity**

CCA and GEO spend millions of dollars lobbying each year for policies that sweep more people of color into jail and detention for longer periods of time. CCA and GEO depend upon their lenders and institutional investors for their lobbying efforts. Without the liquid capital CCA and GEO receive from lenders and investors, they would not have enough money to lobby for unjust policies. In some cases, their biggest investors actually deploy lobbyists to Capitol Hill and the Department of Homeland Security on behalf of the private prison companies. For example, in 2013, CCA and JPMorgan Chase shared the same lobbyists at the lobbying firm McBee Strategic Consulting LLC.



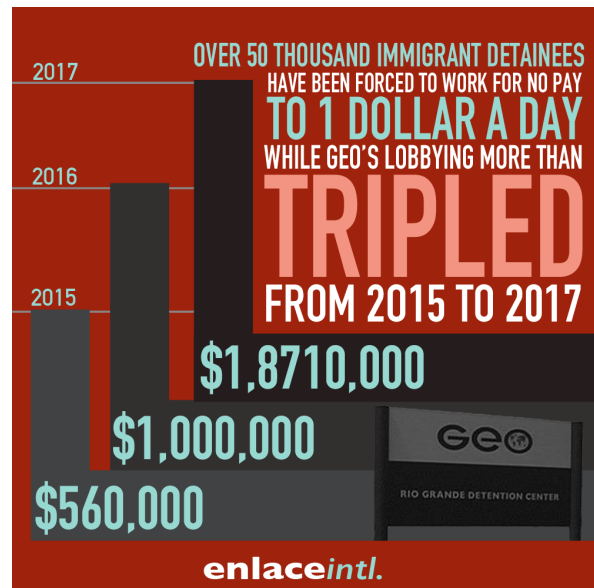


## Fueling the Drug War & Longer Sentences

In the 1990s, the private prison industry and its major investors successfully lobbied for policies that resulted in the mass incarceration of people of color. As participants in the Public Safety and Elections Task Force of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), CCA and GEO (formerly Wackenhut Corrections Corporation) advanced laws that increased the time served for drug convictions and other crimes through [mandatory minimum sentencing](#), three-strikes laws, and truth-in-sentencing laws. These sentencing laws have been disproportionately applied to people of color. While CCA and GEO were pushed out of ALEC and the Task Force has been disbanded, the two decades reign of mandatory sentencing is largely responsible for creating the current crisis where [160,000 people—or one out of every nine prisoners—are serving life sentences](#). 37 percent of three-strikes prosecutions are of African-Americans and 33 percent are of Latinos. These policies have created a system where [there are now more Black people under correctional control—in prison or jail, on probation or parole—than were enslaved in 1850](#).

## Caging Immigrants

While drug laws have long been a major driver in the prison industry, immigration enforcement is now a centerpiece of CCA and GEO's business and lobbying efforts. The U.S. now has a detention bed capacity of more than 37,000 beds—[21,000 of which are privately operated—and a legislated mandate that 34,000 of those beds be filled each night](#). Deporter-in-Chief President Obama used DHS programs like Secure Communities and Priority Enforcement Program (PEP-Comm), to sweep hundreds of thousands of people into immigrant detention. Trump's administration has further weaponized [and expanded](#) the immigrant detention and deportation system, and received enormous lobbying and contributions from GEO in return. [CCA and GEO Group also lobbied around Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#) efforts in 2014. Their efforts were reflected in Senate Bill 744, which would have tripled funding for Operation Streamline in Arizona, and the House's proposed SAFE Act, which significantly increased immigration enforcement. U.S. detention policy has its roots in the anti-Asian racism of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, and is now steered by CCA and GEO.



ICE now spends \$2 billion a year detaining over 400,000 immigrants a year in more than 250 jails and detention centers, and uses GEO subsidiary BI Incorporated to electronically monitor immigrants. More than 40,000 immigrants were monitored by GEO electronic shackles in 2013. The majority of those detained and on GEO ankle bracelets are Latinos. Black immigrants are detained at rates disproportionate to their population size, and [have been targeted at an increasing rate by the Trump administration](#).



## Creating Crimes: Criminal Prosecution of Immigrants

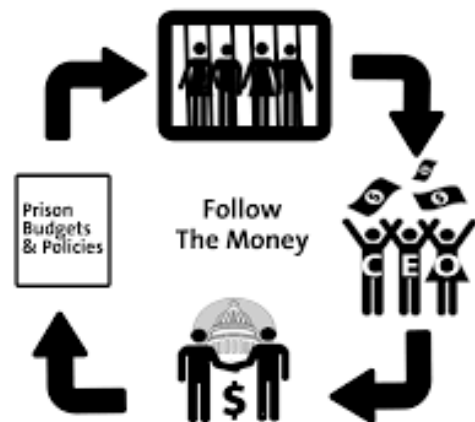
CCA and GEO promote and immensely profit from the criminalization of immigrants. Today, half of the people sentenced to federal prison are Latino. Most of these Latino inmates are convicted of immigration-related crimes, such as illegal entry into the U.S., a misdemeanor, and illegal re-entry, which is a felony punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison. In 2011, illegal re-entry became the top criminal charge brought by federal prosecutors and accounted for a quarter of all criminal prosecutions filed. In the month of February 2015 alone, there were 5669 new immigration convictions. 96% of those convictions were for illegal entry or illegal re-entry. The Bureau of Prisons sets up contracts with CCA and GEO where people incarcerated for immigration offenses are sent to Criminal Alien Requirement (CAR) facilities run exclusively by private contractors. The criminalization of immigrants has created an enormous financial incentive driving increases in border enforcement and brought CCA and GEO an estimated \$1.3 billion in revenue per year.

## The Million Shares Club: The Financial Companies that Own CCA & GEO

Without the financial support of major lenders and investors, CCA and GEO alone would not be strong enough to successfully lobby for policies that increase the federal government's demand for private prisons. With these powerful allies, however, they have been able to sway public policy in favor of more severe "tough on crime" laws and the increasing criminalization of immigrants.

The financial services industry now makes up one-third of the US economy, and its members collectively own over two-thirds of CCA and GEO Group. It is the most powerful lobbying force in both Washington DC and in state governments. To address the root causes of anti-immigrant and other racist legislation, it is imperative that we expose and sever the financial ties that allow Wall Street to cash in on the incarceration of immigrants and people of color.

By targeting major prison lenders and investors we can show our rejection of the PIC and use our influence as investors to demand Socially Responsible Investments. For an up-to-date list of companies that lend to or own over one million shares of CCA and GEO stock, visit [bit.ly/MillionSharesClub](http://bit.ly/MillionSharesClub)



*Image credit: PICO National Network*

Divestment from these financial services companies because they support CCA and GEO will force them to change their investment practices if they want to continue making a profit. With enough public pressure, these major investors will divest or create portfolio screens shielding their investments from making their way to CCA and GEO. **Once deprived of the financial support of their lenders and investors, CCA and GEO will lose capital and with it, their ability to build new facilities and lobby for stricter punishments, anti-immigration laws, and more contracts.**



## The Role of Universities in the National Prison Divest Campaign



Photo credit: Columbia Prison Divest



Photo credit: Fossil Free Stanford

Divestment is an important tactic organized by individuals with access to wealthy institutions to take a stand against immoral corporations and practices using institutional power. Similar to the South African Apartheid divestment campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s, and recent fossil fuel divestment campaigns, Prison Divestment is a tactic that creates a moral dilemma within institutions and fights a capitalist economic system through the means it understands best: money.

Universities are key areas for building a base of student activists demanding divestment from their institution. In the U.S. alone there is over \$500 billion saved in university endowments - an amount that has the potential to have a strong economic impact if divested and to heavily influence political change in a way that's restorative and proactive towards communities most affected (Read: Reinvestment). Winning divestment in universities is not the end goal—after all, if every single university were to divest from for-profit prisons, federal and state prisons and policies that encourage the incarceration of people of color would still exist. It is important to note that **university divestment campaigns are a tactic that serve multiple purposes**. University divestment campaigns:

- 1) assist in building mass awareness and a strong base of student leaders, consequently creating stronger ties between campus groups and community groups,
- 2) actively pressure schools to take a moral and economic stance against unjust practices, and
- 3) build the foundation for the dismantling of the Prison Industrial Complex, the overlapping interest of different institutions and governing bodies that push for criminalization and policing as a solution to political, economic and social problems.

University divestment campaigns are so important and valuable at a national scale. Divestment campaigns pressure institutions that understand profit as their only bottomline, building power that then works towards addressing broader issues of incarceration and oppression.



In campus and campaigns, it is essential to **always keep directly impacted communities and folks at the forefront of the work, as leaders in developing campus strategy and included in your campaign analysis and narrative.** For example, the Black student-led Columbia Prison Divest included in its demands an end to Columbia University's role in increased policing and gentrification of Harlem. When a university with a million dollars invested in private prisons decides to divest and reinvest in community businesses or projects, it is the beginning of reimagining a liberation process in our own space.

Building a critical mass of student coalitions is vital to the broader work of ending the coercive power that private prisons have on communities of color and immigrants in the U.S. University campuses can serve as a foundation for students to organize and build policy campaigns focused on driving money out of private prisons and into the hands of communities that are most affected by racism, cissexism, brutality, and criminalization. Student organizing around divestment strengthens community disdain for racist criminal policies as well as financial strategies that maintain private prisons, adding tremendously to the growing chorus of voices fighting for private prison divestment. Students across campuses nationwide have organized to stand up and demand transparency about their university's role in—directly and otherwise—investing in private prisons.

When students organize they are claiming their power and creating the environment they feel safe in, ensuring their values are carried out through actions.

#### **Real Effing Immoral Tax-free Status**

In 2013, CCA and GEO were granted Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) status by the IRS, which allows them to avoid paying income taxes. In its inaugural REIT year, CCA received a \$71 million tax break and GEO a \$26 million tax rebate. 90% of their stock market trade income is required to be redistributed to their shareholders, solidifying CCA and GEO's relationship with their Million Shares Club investors. The resulting increase in the price of their stock results in higher revenue. The GOP's 2018 tax scam bill gives prison investors a 23% deduction on their investment income, solidifying their dependence on prisons for profit.

The billions in profit and savings without income tax payments enables GEO, CCA and their investors to continue lobbying for racist policies and laws that keep people of color and immigrants behind bars. Eliminating GEO and CCA's REIT status would wipe out the exorbitant funds that support the industry to maintain its prison facilities and meet their quotas for filling beds.

In July 2016, Enlace pressured Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) to introduce the Ending Tax Breaks for Private Prisons Act of 2016. In November 2017, Wyden re-introduced the bill. If passed, the legislation would end tax breaks for companies that derive their income from the operations and maintenance of prisons.

Learn more at  
[enlaceintl.org/revokeREIT](http://enlaceintl.org/revokeREIT)





## Picking your targets

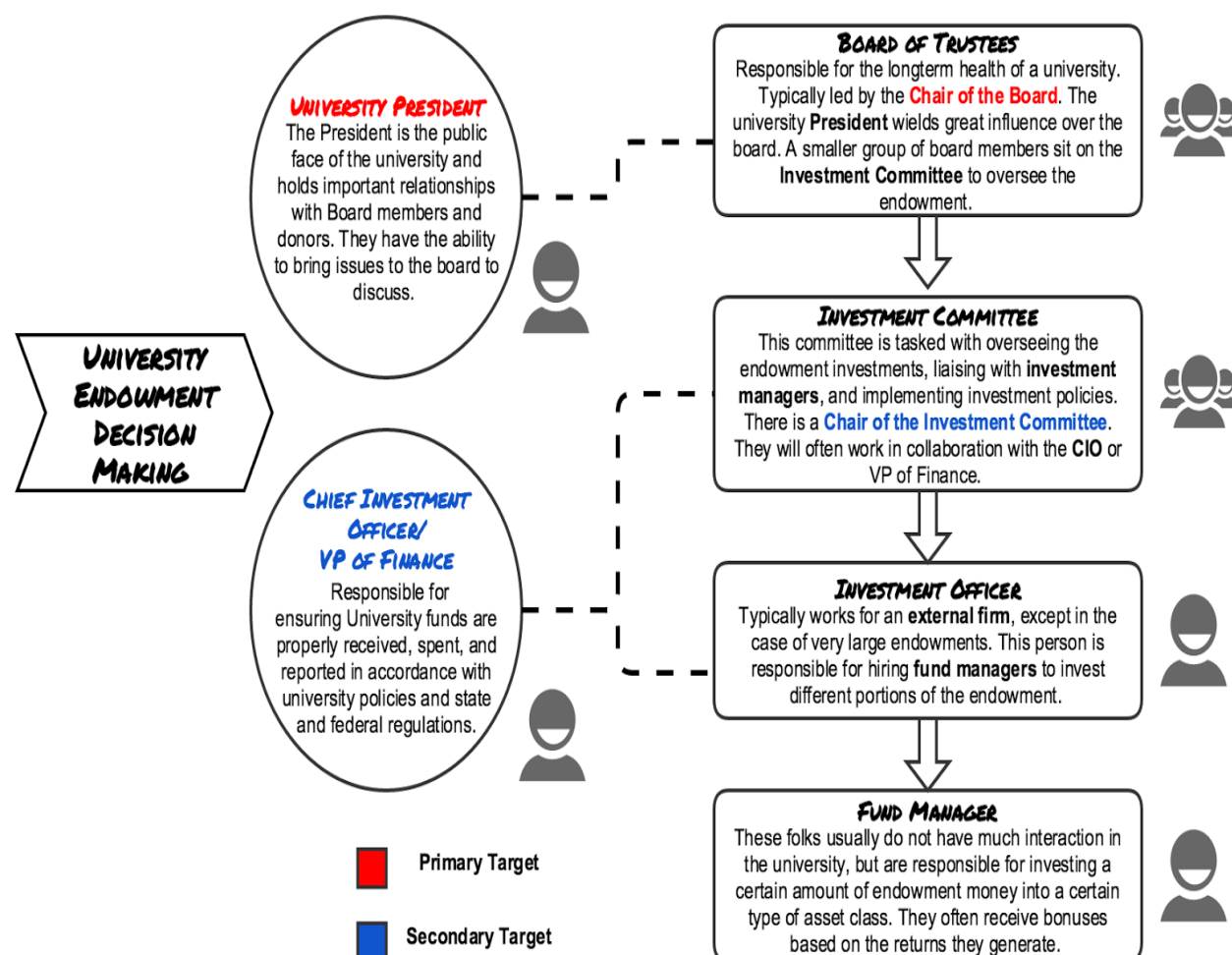
When we talk about divesting money from the private prison industry, we are talking about money in a **university endowment**. The endowment acts like a savings account for the school. It is a large amount of money that gets invested into different companies, property and more in order to generate a return. Very little of the money in the endowment gets spent every year, and its primary function (under capitalism) is to generate more money for the school.

### Picking your target:

Starting your campaign, it is important to figure out who is in a position to meet your demands at the university. In this case, the person who has the power to divest your endowment of private prison companies.

Understanding who controls your school's endowment is often difficult. There are multiple layers of control, which mean multiple points where we can put pressure to win our campaigns.

It is very important, however, to find the **one person** with the ultimate power over your endowment. It is much easier to place pressure on one person than it is on a group of people. This chart shows how decisions about the endowment are made at a university and who you might identify as a primary target (the decision maker) or a secondary target (a person who has influence over your primary target).



While every school is slightly different, the President and the Chair of the Board are often in positions to bring divestment to a vote and can be good **primary targets** because they play very public roles within the school. Some good questions to ask yourself at the beginning of this campaign are:

- Who is this person accountable to? What do they have power over? What constraints do they face?
  - To find this out, see if you can find organizational structure keys in their descriptions on the university website, talk to trusted professors who have been around for a while, brainstorm
- Who supports them/are they well-liked? Who opposes them?
- How do you think they feel about your campaign? What is their history of taking positions on social issues? What is their background (education, faith, politics, work)?
- How do they respond to pressure in public?
- What connections to corporations that benefit from the incarceration of people of color does this person have?

**Secondary targets** are people who can put a lot of pressure on your primary target. It can be helpful to think about these different constituencies and what power they might hold:

- **Faculty:** Is there a faculty council or union? Who has tenure? Are there famous or well-known faculty who are experts on your issue?
- **Staff:** Is the president's office staff allied with prison divestment? Do people like the Dean of Students have sway over your target?
- **Alumni and Donors:** Are there any alums who were part of South African anti-apartheid divestment campaigns in the past? Are there donors who have spoken out about mass incarceration or immigrant detention?

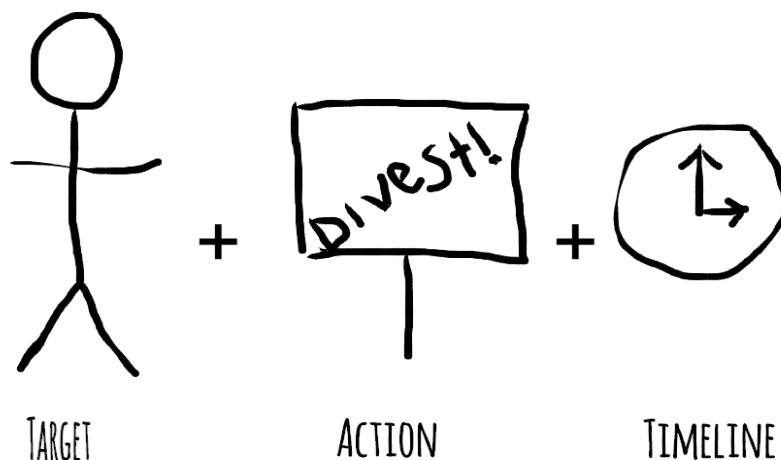


Members of the Columbia Prison Divest campaign hold up signs during a University Senate meeting. During their 16-month campaign, Columbia Prison Divest strategically targeted Columbia University President after systematically targeting every level of university control over the endowment . *Photo credit: Columbia Prison Divest*



## Setting Demands

Campaign demands are made up of three parts: a target, an action, and a timeline:



The overarching, long term demand of this campaign is:

**[Your target]** will **commit to divest** direct stock holdings in private prison companies (including CCA, GEO, and G4S) and implement a screen to stop any future investments in these companies **within** [decide a period of time by which you want this completed].

Additional demands you might consider include:

1. Divest indirect holdings (often money invested through mutual funds and hedge funds) of private prison companies (CUNY has roughly \$250,000 worth of stock in G4S held through an out-of-house investment manager, the Tweedy Browne Global Value fund)
2. Have the university put pressure on the "Million Shares Club," or wall street banks that invest over a million shares in both CCA and GEO Group, to divest. (For a full list of Million Shares Club members, go to [bit.ly/MillionSharesClub](http://bit.ly/MillionSharesClub) )
3. Reinvest 1% of the endowment in supporting businesses run by formerly incarcerated people, or initiatives that interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.
4. Public statement against private prisons, etc.

Your demands may also reflect specific campus actions.

- Many schools are also working to ban the check box on university admissions and hiring forms that asks if the applicant has a criminal record. For more information on ban the box check out: <http://bantheboxcampaign.org/>

It can often feel like you need a ton of information about how your university is invested before you can get started, however that is not the case! Your university is connected to the private prison industry either directly or through one of the Million Shares club members. The most important thing to have when starting your campaign is a solid group of people who are committed to stopping the growth of the prison industrial complex.

If you are starting a campaign, get in contact with Enlace to get connected with other campus campaigns working on private prison divestment. You can email us at [info@enlaceintl.org](mailto:info@enlaceintl.org).



*Not all campuses have the organizing capacity to take on their university's endowments, but all campuses have a role in the #prisondivest movement to expose and cut college connections to the prison industry. Divest from Detention is a strategy useful on commuter campuses, where organizing capacity may be limited, or where you need to build capacity to take on the university's endowments.*

## **Divest from Detention! Invest in Communities!**

*Changing the Conversation of Wells Fargo and commercial banks on your campus*

TIGRA's campus campaign focuses on how students and communities can use their economic power (e.g. having student accounts at Wells Fargo or related bank) to revisit partnerships on your campus that may be aiding in the prison industrial complex. This campaign can both create a conversation to divest out of harmful industries and invest in your local economy.

### **Step 1: Finding Core Committee Members to explore issue**

Find out who already works on similar issues of immigrant rights, criminal justice, campus budgets or tuition cuts - students that may share the same values of either supporting or advocating for people most affected by the private detention system (undocumented families) or students who care about where their money is going within their school. If your campus has the Wells Fargo card, find out who has Wells Fargo bank accounts: they will be the users with the most sway.

- *Step 1A: Find students most affected by Wells Fargo partnerships and allies*
  - Identify student allies interested in the issue
  - Identify professors or departments working on social justice (Ethnic Studies, Chicana Studies)
- *Step 1B: Build your Organizing Committee*
  - Start recruiting to create a local committee!
    - Recruitment Tactic #1 - Create a survey for students using Wells Fargo's student ID and Debit Card
    - Recruitment Tactic #2 - Create a focus group to breakdown connections of Wells Fargo's partnership with your school

### **Step 2: Build your Base for your first Action by obtaining a copy of your school's contract with Wells Fargo**

Now that you have a Core Committee, it's time to build a broader base of student interest on Wells Fargo's private prison investments and your local campus connection to that system.

- Recruitment Tactic #1- Host Film discussion on private detention industrial complex
- *Step #2A – Conduct A Power Analysis-* Find out which campus department developed the campus card and Wells Fargo banking partnership. Start by finding your campus' organizational chart.
- *Step #2B Plan Your First Action-* Organize an accountability meeting with your school's Business Development or School Procurement Director regarding Wells Fargo Debit





Card and Student ID. Publicly request in writing to see campus contract with Wells Fargo to understand how much money is made within partnership.

### **Step 3: Organize student/community alliances to understand detention issues and find alternative banking with ethical standards**

To make your campaign sustainable and accountable, create alliances outside your campus with local immigrant rights and criminal justice groups who work on issues related to local private or government detention facilities. In working together, identify how your demands from both the community and campus can overlap to support local economies, reinvest in impacted communities, and cut ties to private prisons.

- Recruitment Tactic #1 - Conduct a "Protecting Families Tour" - Find organizations who are already working with people incarcerated within detention facilities (e.g. Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC)).

Connect students to community issues happening around your campus:

- Research 1 – Find out the terrain of alternative, ethical banking (credit unions, regional banks) in your area
- Internal Action – Create Ethical Banking Standards most important to students and community members

### **Step 4: Plan Accountability Action with Wells Fargo and or related commercial bank**

Now that you have educated both the campus and community, obtained the official contract on what revenues are going towards the school, and built a base of Wells Fargo account holders, you have developed **leverage** to flex your economic power!

- Step 4A: Identify local branch and demand to cut off all detention investments, share Ethical Banking Standards
- Step4B: Plan a "Move Your Money Day" where student account holders collectively move Wells Fargo Bank accounts to an ethical bank
- Step4C: Celebrate the amount of divestment dollars students collectively taken out of the prison industry!

### **Step 5: Demand University cut ties with Banks investing in prisons**

Successfully pushing a bank branch off campus is a huge feat, and puts your organization in a powerful position to make further demands on the university to cut off endowment investments in private prisons and the Million Shares Club.

For More information, visit [www.transnationalaction.org](http://www.transnationalaction.org)



## Students Win Historic First-Ever Campus Prison Divestment at Columbia

On June 22, 2015, following sixteen months of relentless student activism, the Columbia



University Board of Trustees announced its decision to divest from the private prison industry and institute a policy banning reinvestment in companies that operate prisons. This decision makes Columbia the very first university to divest from the private prison industry.

*"We targeted the university's investments in two private prison companies, but we hope that private prison divestment campaigns, with the abolitionist vision of a larger anti-prison movement, can help us start working towards divesting from the idea that prisons equal justice, which we believe to be fundamentally racist." - Dunni Oduyemi*

The Columbia Prison Divest campaign was launched in February 2014 by Students Against Mass Incarceration, a Black-led prison abolitionist student group, after students discovered that approximately \$10 million of Columbia University's endowment was invested in two for-profit prison companies: the Corrections Corporation of America and G4S. CCA, GEO Group, and G4S have played major, active roles in pushing for legislation that further criminalizes marginalized communities such as mandatory minimum laws and Arizona's infamous SB1070 statute. Alumni, faculty, staff, and West Harlem community members came together to support the student-run campaign demanding immediate divestment from these companies and a permanent negative screen against any future investments.

*"My involvement in this campaign has been about acknowledging my complicity in racist systems of incarceration and policing. As a student at an elite university, I have a choice to quietly benefit or take the opportunity to leverage my privilege to hold my school accountable" - Ella Every-Wortman, student organizer*

*"These companies have a fundamental interest in expanding incarceration in order to maximize profit. We will not see an end to the racism and exploitation embedded in our contemporary systems of mass incarceration and detention if we do not dismantle the economic engines of this prison-industrial complex." - Gabriela Catalina Pelsinger, student organizer*

Prison Divest is a strategy born out of collaboration between immigrant justice and anti-mass incarceration organizers in a common fight against the criminalization of marginalized communities. Student organizers have situated prison divestment in the context of broader visions for change. Through their actions, political education, and avid social media presence,

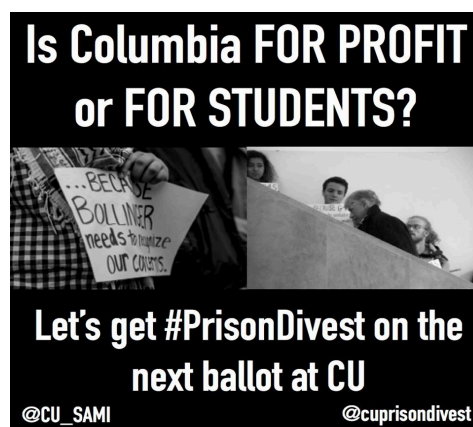


Columbia Prison Divest has tied their work to the Black Lives Matter movement, anti-gentrification efforts in West Harlem, the movement to divest from the Israeli police state, and activism against immigrant detention and the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border.

*"Universities investing in prisons reinforce systems of inequality that allow only some to succeed. As a Black student, I know that Columbia is actively doing violence against people that look like me in a number of ways. I refuse to be just another brown face in a college brochure that my school can use to mask the systemic racism it participates in."* - Asha Rosa, student organizer

*"From the start we wanted to establish those links that what's happening globally is happening domestically"* - Imani Brown, alum and former organizer

*"For us, prison divestment has been an entry point for addressing the ways in which students at elite colleges and universities are directly and specifically in the privileged positions that we are because of systems of inequality. The racist, classist images of "criminals deserving of punishment" are created in tandem with images of "hard-working college students deserving of opportunity," and each is defined in relation to the other. Through prison divestment, we have worked to challenge these narratives and structures. We refuse to buy into the false narratives that justify our privilege at the expense of the suffering of others. We hope this victory opens doors to more campaigns, to more organizing, to more victories. This is not the end. This is a beginning"* - Columbia Prison Divest campaign organizers



## Columbia Prison Divest Timeline



- **December 2013** A group of students discovered that, as of June 30, 2013, Columbia University had \$10 million invested in the private prison industry
- **February 3, 2014** Students delivered a letter President Bollinger's office requesting a meeting to hear their concerns regarding the university's investment in private prisons and officially launching the Columbia Prison Divest (CPD) campaign demanding divestment
- **April 8, 2014** CPD presents their case for prison divestment to the university's Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing (ACSRI) for the first time
- **April 14-18, 2014** CPD held a week of engagement "People, Prisons & Profit" in solidarity with other campaigns across the nation
- **April 16, 2014** CPD delivered second letter to President Bollinger demanding action
- **September 26, 2014** Students rallied outside of World Leader's Forum Event "Children in the Age of Sustainable Development" on Columbia's campus drawing attention to the unsustainability of mass incarceration and its impact on youth
- **October 22, 2014** As a part of the National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, students held a silent protest outside of President Bollinger's class
- **November 11, 2014** After multiple delays, members of CPD present to the ACSRI for a second time to an almost entirely new committee
- **November 24, 2014** President Bollinger meets with CPD for the first time
- **January 20, 2015** ACSRI hosts Community Engagement Panel on Private Prison Divestment where students voiced their overwhelming support for divestment
- **March 30, 2015** University Senate Student Affairs Committee, representing all 26 graduate and undergraduate schools, voted to call upon the university to divest
- **March 31, 2015** ACSRI voted unanimously to recommend divestment to Board of Trustees
- **April 2, 2015** Students held a silent protest at the University Senate Plenary calling on the Board of Trustees to act immediately following the votes from the Senate and ACSRI
- **April 19-25, 2015** CPD held second Week of Engagement "Divestment Pending Abolition"
- **April 24, 2015** CPD and supporters staged a day-long sit-in outside the President's office demanding he respond to the recent votes and put divestment on the Board of Trustees agenda for their next meeting
- **April 27, 2015** CPD organizers meet with President Bollinger the second time
- **May 15, 2015** In an email, President Bollinger announced his personal support for prison divestment and confirmed that the issue would be taken up at the next scheduled Board of Trustees meeting in June
- **June 22, 2015** Board of Trustees announces decision to divest from private prison industry

**More resources on the Columbia Prison Divestment victory are available on [enlaceintl.org/resources](http://enlaceintl.org/resources) and [facebook.com/columbiaprisondivest](https://facebook.com/columbiaprisondivest).**





## Black Student Organizing Wins Prison Divestment and Reinvestment in Black Scholars

This campaign is connected to Freedom Cities because its organizers clearly articulated in their demands their vision for what they wanted in place of investments in prisons. Black students and faculty demanded and won investments in the resources and environment that will allow them to thrive and feel safe and comfortable on campus.

### **Framing:**

Black students at Cal State LA have been, and still are, consistently made the targets of racist attacks by fellow students, faculty, and administration. These attacks come in many forms. Some are more overt and some subtle. Racially insensitive remarks and micro-aggressions by professors and students create a learning environment that is not conducive to the overall learning atmosphere. This presents unnecessary barriers to the success of Black students here on campus. As the percentage of Black students at Cal State L.A. decreases, the intensity and frequency of these racially driven occurrences has increased. It is your duty as president of this university to address the concerns of ALL of your students, as well as, create and implement programs that will attract and increase the Black student population at Cal State L.A. (i.e., programs such as GO East LA but for Black students). CSLA continues to fail Black students, by not responding, or taking any steps towards the improvement of the campus atmosphere as it relates to its Black students. This university has a history of a poor racial climate, and we, as the Black Student Union and Black student body, will not take it anymore. You must do all that you can to make sure that Black students, currently only 4% of the student body, feel welcomed, safe, and at home at the university that was built on our backs. CSLA must follow in the steps of UC Santa Barbara and UC Berkeley, to support Black students during such a critical time in our history. However, since nothing has been done in recent years, the Black Student Union, along with the entire black student body of CSLA, is DEMANDING that CSLA administrators work with the Black student Union towards the development of a more positive campus climate by complying with our demands.

The Black Student Union demanded institutional change in November of 2015, and the Cal State Los Angeles president and administration responded. Both parties collaborated, and continue to collaborate, to create a better learning environment for Black students at Cal State L.A. Following two meetings, President Covino responded to BSU's demands in writing on December 7, 2015.

### **Framing Resources:**

[Full Demand Letter by CSLA Black Student Union](#)

[Student demands for end to campus racism compiled by the Black Liberation Collective](#)



## Campaign Goal:

Black students feel welcomed, safe, and at home at the university that was built on our backs.

## Campaign Victory:

- **CSLA DIVESTED from all Private Prison corporations!** This is a historic and significant victory for Black communities and makes CSLA the third university to divest from private prisons and the second public institution to do so following the UC's recent decision to divest at the urging of the Afrikan Black Coalition.
- The Director of Housing worked with administration and the BSU in creating and developing Halisi Scholars Black Living-Learning community. Culturally relevant programming and spaces are essential to the overall academic success of Black students.
- The president agreed to allocate \$100,000 to the Cross Cultural Centers to be divided between the four student centers effective January 1, 2016.
- Beginning in fall 2016, all students are now required to complete one diversity course and one race and ethnicity course.
- The President agreed to allocate \$100,000 for staffing and other costs to increase the yield of Black students who get accepted into Cal State L.A. for Fall 2016, and an additional \$100,000 for the recruitment of Black students for Fall 2017.
- The President committed to the hiring of new staff psychologists who have demonstrated experience in working with Black students.

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## A Legacy of Divestment

The Prison Divestment Campaign is part of a long history of students fighting against injustice through divestment. The campaign for divestment from South Africa spanned decades—and by the 1990s students at universities across the country pressured their student governments into pulling away financial support for the apartheid regime. Those divestment campaigns laid the groundwork for international sanctions against apartheid; the voice of the people spoke clearly against injustice. Students have, at other times, fought against brutal genocide in Sudan, and built divestment campaigns that attacked corporations supporting the government in Khartoum. In California, the UC campaign led to the state of California divesting its pensions, some of the largest in the country, from Sudan. And finally, alongside our own campaigns against private prisons, students across the country have fought against the Israeli Occupation through participation in the campaign for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions, pushing their university funds to divest from companies that benefit from the occupation. Each one of these campaigns had students at the forefront pushing for radical change and bringing to the fore issues that might have otherwise been kept out of the spotlight. In our work against the private prison industry we are continuing to fight against injustice, bringing the necessity of abolishing prisons, detention and deportation into public awareness. **We will win.**  
**in our institutions and win.**

