

## Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

**<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/civil-rights-groups-urge-federal-government-not-hold-immigrants-youngstown-prison>**

### Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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CLEVELANDA coalition of 21 civil rights, faith and immigrants rights organizations issued a letter to Jeh Johnson, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, urging him to end contract negotiations with Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) regarding use of the Northeast Ohio Correctional Center (NEOCC) to detain immigrants. The letter cites concerns about prisons for profit, inhumane treatment of immigrants, and alternative options for asylum seekers.

The Department of Justice deemed prisons for profit unfit for federal prisoners just two months ago after finding evidence of widespread abuse, said Jocelyn Rosnick, Assistant Policy Director of the ACLU of Ohio. Since NEOCC opened under CCAs control in 1997, there have been ongoing problems, including multiple murders and escapes. In 2014, the Federal Bureau of Prisons declined to renew their contract with NEOCC. We are disturbed that the Department of Homeland Security would bail out a prison for profit with such a troubled history by housing asylum seekers, when the structure and operation of the prison are unchanged.

The federal government expects to detain 45,000 immigrants *daily*, a record high under the Obama administration. The recent influx is primarily due to asylum seekers, including many Haitians fleeing natural disasters. Immigration and Customs Enforcement should be detaining immigrants as a last resort, said Rosnick. We need to find more cost-effective and appropriate alternatives for asylum seekers, and reducing detention levels nationwide should be a top priority for Secretary Johnson.

The ACLU of Ohio is also requesting that the Department of Homeland Security consult community stakeholders on the contract discussions, as well as notify the public of any other pending ICE detention procurement activities in the state. At the very least, this contract must not be approved while the Department of Homeland Security Advisory Committee reviews ICEs use of private prisons in the first place, Rosnick said.

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**[Read the ACLU of Ohio letter to Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson](#)**

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