

Defund For-Profit Prisons: Enact 'Justice Is Not for Sale' Ordinances* in Every Community

WHEREAS the United States prison population (now the largest in the world) has risen dramatically since the growth of for-profit prisons and detention centers less than 40 years ago, with black people and other people of color showing a dis-proportional increase; and San Diego County has five private prisons, is particularly affected by for-profit immigrant detention centers, and has a poor human rights record for its prisons (e.g., the highest in custody death rate) resulting in costly lawsuits;

WHEREAS the use of private, profit-based corporations to administer justice is inconsistent with American democratic principles and is reminiscent of some of the worst government actions in our nation's history (e.g., internment of Japanese Americans);

WHEREAS for-profit prisons provide an economic incentive to not only increase incarceration, but to cut costs for and charge prisoners exorbitant prices for basic human necessities; and prisons for profit have an inordinate political influence, especially locally (through campaign donations to both Democrats and Republicans, lobbying and institutional investing) resulting in long-standing barriers to criminal justice reform; and, the California private prison ban (AB 32) has been dubbed "not a ban at all", because it excludes the most profitable segments of the prison industrial economy, such as leasing and providing ancillary services (the state still uses private prisons, just not for management and staffing);

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the San Diego County Democratic Party calls on every municipality in San Diego County to enact 'Justice Is Not for Sale' Ordinances prohibiting private prisons (including service contracts with private prisons), closing existing private prisons and divesting from prisons for profit.

Note*Named for the 2015 Justice Is Not for Sale Act (Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-VT) and Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) which would have banned private prisons (federal, state and local) within two years.