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Congress must stop Trump's exorbitant spending on new contracts for ICE detention & arrests

Advocates condemn windfall for private prison contractors at the expense of vital public services

April 8, 2025: The Trump administration is on a reckless spending spree to build up its detention and deportation machine, in many cases trampling over basic human rights while bankrupting our communities. Now, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has issued a solicitation for "[Emergency Detention and Related Services](#)," which could spend up to [\\$45 billion](#) over two years for new ICE jails and related services. This would allow ICE to open new facilities run by private prison corporations that have already reaped hundreds of millions off of the detention of our neighbors and loved ones—including [infants](#), [students](#), and long-standing community members. The solicitation for emergency funds comes less than a week after the Chair and Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee sent a bipartisan [letter](#) to the Trump administration challenging its treatment of emergency-designated funding included in the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025.

ICE's sprawling detention apparatus covers more than 40 states and U.S. territories, including privately run mega prisons and county jails. Since Trump returned to office, the detention apparatus has [spread](#) with new contracts with Bureau of Prisons (BOP) jails and its unlawful expansion of immigration detention to Naval Station Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. The administration is also seeking to expand to [military bases](#) and has entered into new [agreements](#) with private prison companies.

The new solicitation would be a huge boost to the private prison industry, including to companies with ties to cabinet-level officials that spend millions lobbying Congress. Notably, [Attorney General Pam Bondi is a former lobbyist](#) for the private prison company GEO Group, which donated over a million dollars alone to Trump's reelection. The CEO of the other major private prison company CoreCivic has said publicly he expects to see the "most significant growth" in his company's history over the next several years. With the Trump administration lifting the Biden-era ban on private prison contracts, these companies are looking to [cash in](#) on both new privately operated prisons as well as new ICE detention contracts. Just last month, the Senate [passed](#) a funding bill that ceded authority to the Trump administration, granting broad discretion on how to direct funding to wreak more havoc on all our communities, including: nearly \$500 million additional slush funds for ICE to give the agency

a nearly \$10 billion budget; shortchanging a number of essential programs including veterans, seniors, and children. The new contracts will be even more difficult for Congress and the public to monitor. The use of “strategic sourcing” contracting means that instead of numerous individual procurements, the agency can easily and quickly issue task orders for detention services. This will be a much faster process than a typical detention contract or inter-governmental agreement, making it easier to simply contract with the big private prison companies already dominating the industry. The solicitation also notes that there will be “no public disclosure regarding the contract made by the contractor (or any subcontractors) without review and approval of such disclosure by ICE Public Affairs,” leaving the public in the dark about new contracts opening in their communities. ICE’s lack of transparency while spending tens of billions of taxpayer funds is breathtaking.

The solicitation for new contracts indicates that the facilities will also be held to less stringent detention standards that are meant only for small local facilities. This means that private prison companies will have few binding requirements regarding conditions of confinement in custody, and will be able to defer to their own procedures for key areas such as environmental health and safety. At the same time, the administration is [dismantling](#) structured oversight of existing and new facilities. At least three people have [died](#) in ICE detention since Trump took office. The expansion means that more people will be trapped in inhumane and at times life-threatening conditions, and private contractors will inflict abuses with impunity.

Now, Congress is currently negotiating a massive budget packet that will [supercharge](#) the Trump administration’s crackdown, trampling [basic constitutional rights](#) and vital public services. We urge members of Congress to vote against an expansion of funds for immigration detention through reconciliation and other budget processes.