



Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

Strength in Numbers 95,000

William Hamilton, President & Eastern PA Legislative Coordinator – Joseph Molinero, Sec.-Treasurer & Western PA Legislative Coordinator – Tim O'Neill, Consultant – Dan Grace, Trustee & Legislative Advisor – Robert Baptiste, Esq. Legal Advisor

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT



The secret, dangerous world of private prisons

According to Philly.com in an article posted on line GEO and other leading for-profit prison corporations have been plagued by health and safety issues for years, with prisoner and staff complaints and wrongful-death lawsuits piling up like mounds of unopened jail mail.

But the companies have enjoyed a lucrative relationship with the federal government. Since 1997, they've been paid billions by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons to annually house more than 34,000 federal inmates. It was a convenient arrangement for a nation with the world's highest prison population, underpinned by a belief that private corporations could do the job cheaper and better.

The government's stance toward companies like GEO underwent a dramatic shift last summer. In early August, the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General released a [troubling report](#) that showed contract prisons had far higher rates of violence and lockdowns, and poorer access to medical care, than comparable federally run facilities.

GEO officials contend the report painted a grossly distorted portrait of its prisons. Its facilities are "equally safe, secure and humane as government-run

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/crime/private-prisons-sessions-yates-geo-assault-death.html>

facilities," Pablo Paez, a GEO spokesman, wrote in an email to the Inquirer and Daily News.

But a few weeks later, then-Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates issued a [memo](#) that directed the Bureau of Prisons to phase out its use of private-run prisons altogether. This was a potentially fatal blow to the industry; the stock price of publicly traded GEO plummeted 40 percent that day.

Then history intervened. Since the election of President Trump, GEO — which [donated \\$170,000 to a Trump political action committee](#) last year, and [\\$250,000 to his inaugural bash](#) — has seen its stock price nearly quadruple. One of Attorney General Jeff Sessions' first moves after taking office in February was to [rescind](#) Yates' memo.

So instead of being cut off, GEO is raking in the money. The company has signed \$774 million worth of [federal contracts](#) so far this year, including a [\\$110 million deal](#) to build an immigration detention center in Texas.

To read and view entire article, go to:

