

UUFD Social Responsibility and Justice
Immigration Team
Community Education – volume 3

Immigrant Detention

US Immigration Detention is the practice of incarcerating immigrants while they await a determination of their immigration status or potential deportation. In 2013 there were over 440,000 immigrants in 200 US detention centers.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) runs the detention system and subcontracts most of the detention space to county jails and private prison companies. ICE is required by Congress to maintain and fill 34,000 detention beds on a daily basis. Such quotas are non-existent in other law enforcement agencies.

Immigrants in detention include individuals with and without documentation. Many have been in the US for many years with no criminal violations. They also include refugees from torture, asylum seekers, children, women (including pregnant women), some of whom are seriously ill. Often immigrants and refugees in detention do not receive adequate medical care or legal counsel, and are denied contact with family. Since 2003 about 160 people have died in detention centers.

Immigration Detention Center Facts:

Total number of beds:	34,040	
Number of detention centers	209	
Detained Immigrants	441,000	(2013)
Daily Cost	\$124	adult
	\$343	family
Federal Operated Centers	79	
Private Companies	130	(62%)

[www.detentionwatchnetwork](http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org) 1/6/2017

Daily average population of detained immigrants in 2014 was 34,000, up from 5,000 in 1994. People in our area who are taken into detention are taken to the Colorado Immigration Center in Aurora, which houses more than 900 immigrants each day. The Aurora facility is privately owned by The GEO Group, Inc. which would like to increase the daily limit to 1400.

(Boulder Weekly, Dec. 8, 2016)

After the November election of Donald Trump, the stocks of GEO and CoreCivic, the two largest for-profit detention companies, increased by 20 to 40% respectively. (NPR All Things Considered, Jan.4, 2017). Annual U.S. spending on detention was \$2 billion in 2105, and the cost is paid by the taxpayers.

Being undocumented is not a criminal activity, it is an administrative violation. Undocumented only means not in possession of paperwork. All Human Beings are “legal”, with basic Human Rights as declared by:

The 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

1. We are all Born Free and Equal.
2. Don't Discriminate
3. The Right to Live in Freedom and Safety.

7. We are all Equal Before The Law
8. Human Rights are Protected by Law
- 9. No Unfair Detainment**
14. The Right to Seek a Safe Place to Live
28. A Fair and Free World. (There must be proper order so we can all enjoy rights and freedom in our own country and all over the world.)
- 30: No one can take away your Human Rights.

The following are recommendations for correcting this unjust and inhumane system:

- Congress should eliminate the immigrant detention quota from its 2016 appropriations request.
- ICE should reduce reliance on for-profit prison contractors. Congress should increase oversight within the contracting system and launch a system-wide review of the contracted prisons and their related intergovernmental service agreements.
- ICE should end contracts at facilities with a record of abuse and penalize contractors found to have multiple incidents of abuse or mismanagement in their facilities.
- Congress and the Administration should prioritize policies that expand the use of non-punitive, community-supported alternative to detention (ATD) programs. However, these measures must be used in place of current detention capacity, *not* in addition to it. The intent of any ATD program should be to reduce the population in immigration detention, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the immigration detention system entirely.

www.grassrootsleadership.org

If immigrants need to be tracked and accounted for, it can be done with:

- Parole/release on own recognizance
- Bond
- Check-ins at ICE Offices
- Home visits and check-ins
- Telephone monitoring
- GPS monitoring through an electronic ankle bracelet
(www.detentionwatchnetwork.org)

According to Danny Quinlin, Director of Compañeros: Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center, there are about 600-800 undocumented immigrants in La Plata County, and an estimated 1500 including Archuleta, and Montezuma Counties.

I have lived in Durango for over 13 years and am not aware of immigrants with dangerous behavior or criminal activity that should cause us fear.

As Unitarians we cannot allow immigrants to be denied their Human Rights, and be placed in For-Profit Detention Centers with no access to legal counsel.

Susana Jones