End the Bed Quota on Detention of Immigrants

Silver Spring (May 8, 2014)—The Conference of Major Superiors of Men has been working diligently on comprehensive immigration reform. One of the main obstacles to such reform is the bed quota from Congress that requires the incarceration of 34,000 immigrants in detention at any given time. The for-profit prison industry is a key driver of the status-quo unjust immigration system, which includes this profit-guaranteeing bed quota.

CMSM’s President Very Rev. John Edmunds, ST states, “A comprehensive approach to immigration reform is based on the values of human dignity, compassion, and hospitality includes a pathway to citizenship, keeping together and re-uniting families, protecting refugees and asylees, due process protections for immigrants, a major decrease in deportations, and addressing root causes or drivers of migration.” In contrast, the bed quota promotes detentions, deportations, and the dividing of families.

For-profit prisons such as CCA and GEO are pouring millions into funding certain candidates and lobbying Congress primarily to increase the market and win immigration-related detention contracts, and thus, inevitably influence immigration reform legislation to focus on detention and deportation.\(^1\) The emphasis on border and interior enforcement will increase people in detention centers, increase the amount of deportations, and increase profits at the expense of the poor and marginalized.

This is very disappointing and disheartening. We call on Congress and the U.S. President to end the bed quota. We also call on them to avoid taking money from for-profit prisons and allowing these corporations to influence immigration policy. CMSM plans to explore divesting from any contributions we make to CCA and GEO, while we encourage other individuals and organizations to look at their investments and discern whether to urgently push shareholder advocacy that diminishes the negative influence CCA and GEO have on immigration, or to publicly pursue divestment.

The Joy of the Easter season and the gifts of the Spirit at Pentecost draw us to take brave and courageous risks, especially for immigrant sisters and brothers suffering injustice.

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\(^1\) CCA acknowledges the need to expand detentions: “(o)ur growth is generally dependent upon our ability to obtain new contracts to develop (italics added) and manage new correctional and detention facilities. Corrections Corporation of America, 2012 Annual Report (July 17, 2013 at 2:34 PM), http://ir.correctionscorp.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=117983&p=irol-reportsannual.