

**DECARCERATE - REPARATE - LIBERATE**



**A Toolkit for Campus Organizers**

# **Private Prison Divestment**



## Who We Are

Enlace is a strategic alliance of low-wage worker centers, unions, and community organizations in Mexico and in the U.S. We partner with our member organizations in international campaigns to motivate abusive transnational corporations to treat workers and communities with dignity and respect. We have considerable expertise in the mechanics of building strategic campaigns while strengthening the base of an organization, and we share this knowledge with community organizations through our advanced organizing training Institute. **[enlaceintl.org](http://enlaceintl.org)**



In 2011, Enlace convened the Private Prison Divestment Campaign to fight the devastating impacts of mass incarceration on low-income, immigrant, and Black and Brown communities. We aim to break the lobbying power of the private prison industry at all levels of government to make it possible to halt unjust incarcerations of immigrants and people of color. More than 145 organizations nation-wide are participating in the Campaign to get our money and our community members out of the prison industrial complex.

**[divest-reinvest.org](http://divest-reinvest.org)**

The Responsible Endowments Coalition (REC) works to change how colleges invest, shifting from investments that fund social and environmental destruction to investments that build community and a just economy. REC builds power by organizing students, alumni, faculty, and the larger community to challenge and pressure universities to invest their endowments in line with their values. REC has been involved with the national prison divestment campaign since 2013, and continues to support student organizing for divestment from prison companies to undermine the ways by which prison profiteers continue to draw support and legitimacy from our colleges and universities. **[endowmentethics.org](http://endowmentethics.org)**



The Transnational Institute for Grassroots Research and Action (TIGRA) empowers transnational families to make their economic choices matter, coursing their money and resources into projects and businesses that benefit us all. We cultivate committed partnerships with the private sector and enjoin businesses to work with immigrant communities towards an exit strategy in massive out-migration. Through partnership, we can shape the economic conditions that make migration a choice, rather than a necessity for future generations of transnational families. **[transnationalaction.org](http://transnationalaction.org)**

## Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

Across the United States, major universities invest in the prison industrial complex (PIC) through their endowments and pension funds. In other words, universities are profiting off of human misery and prison expansion. Students across the nation are standing up to demand their universities divest from for-profit prisons and other prison profiteers that are driving mass incarceration and immigration enforcement.

This toolkit provides a step-by-step guide on how you as a student body can organize to dismantle the PIC by organizing a divestment campaign on your campus. **We explain why divestment is critical to overcoming the profit-driven criminal and immigration systems and the mechanics of getting your university to divest. We feature a case study on the historic divestment victory at Columbia University that will inform and inspire your strategy.**

GEO Group (GEO) and Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) are driving the mass incarceration of people of color in the U.S., and internationally with G4S. In the U.S., these for-profit prison companies have successfully lobbied for policies that lock Black and Brown bodies behind bars, with our tax dollars paying private companies to keep them there. With the financial assistance of their major investors, CCA and GEO will continue to lobby for policies that fuel mass incarceration and the mass detention of immigrants. By taking on private prisons, we are able to strategically target a cornerstone of the PIC.

This toolkit is provided by the Private Prison Divestment Campaign, an effort coordinated by Enlace. Check [prisondivestment.com](http://prisondivestment.com), [divest-reinvest.org](http://divest-reinvest.org) and [enlaceintl.org](http://enlaceintl.org) for more resources and reach out to the Enlace team ([info@enlaceintl.org](mailto:info@enlaceintl.org)) with questions and ideas.

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## What is Prison Divestment?

**We call on local institutions to divest from private prisons and their major investors.** Private prison corporations perversely profit from incarceration and use their money and political influence to lobby for harsh criminal penalties and anti-immigrant legislation. They benefit directly from and work to exacerbate mass incarceration, one of the driving forces of racial inequality in America today. Private prison corporations are dependent upon capital from their major investors to fund their lobbying efforts. Our local and academic institutions should not invest our money in, nor profit from this system of human misery.

**Divestment is the act of selling one's assets in a company for political or social reasons. It is a way for the investor to admonish an unethical corporation by withdrawing financial assets.** The overall goals of divestment are to reduce a corporation's financial capacity to engage in business-as-usual (building and running prisons) and to publicize an injustice that a corporation is furthering. Divestment is an effective strategy where we want to abolish an industry or way of doing business, rather than reform it.

University and city divestment is a way for us to pressure the big banks financing the lobbying efforts and new construction of private prisons (who we call the Million Shares Club), and the politicians with the power to cut tax breaks and contracts with private prisons and to change racist criminal and immigration laws. When institutions that control significant amounts of money—like universities—divest, there is significant media coverage that raises public awareness and brings to light how big banks uphold the prison system by financing these corporations through share-buying and loans. Financial institutions will not stop financing an industry until they feel the repercussions of their investments in their profit margins and public image. Major institutional divestment forces Million Shares Club investors to address their support of the prison industry publicly and cut their ties with these companies. Divesting from private prisons and the Million Shares Club will radically reduce the amount of money spent buying out politicians to further mass incarceration and immigration enforcement. **When we reduce the ability of the entire private prison industry to lobby for mass incarceration and immigration enforcement, we will be much closer to living in a world where people of color and immigrants are decriminalized, a world free of cages.**

Divestment also opens the door to conversations on reinvestment, and reinforces the critical work already happening in communities for civilian oversight of police, reduction in police-ICE collaboration, sanctuary cities, houseless advocacy, mental health services, and other work intimately tied to the decriminalization of people of color, immigrants and low-income peoples. **Prison divestment allows us to ask and answer the question: If we divested from the prison industrial complex, what community initiatives could we reinvest in?**

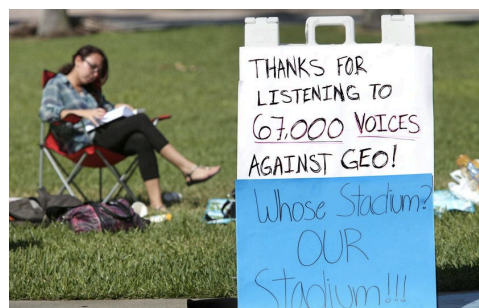


**Divest. Decarcerate. Decriminalize.**  
**Reinvest. Liberate.**



## Divestment Victories

- **2011:**
  - Pershing Square Capital Management, fully divested its CCA holdings of over 7 million shares worth \$180 million
- **2012:**
  - The Pension Board of the United Methodist Church—the largest faith-based pension fund in the U.S.—announced divestment of all its private prison holdings
  - Podesta Group, a powerful lobbying firm in Washington D.C., dropped GEO Group as a client
  - General Electric fully divested its nearly 2.7 million shares in CCA
  - The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) created a portfolio screen to prevent prison investments
- **2013:**
  - Florida Atlantic University students prevented GEO Group from donating \$6 million to their university and gaining naming rights to their stadium
  - Amica and DSM Netherlands fully divested from CCA and GEO Group
- **2014:**
  - 5 University of California student senates passed divestment resolutions
  - Granite Peak Unitarian Universalist Church dropped its accounts with Wells Fargo due to their prison investments
  - Scopia fully divested from private prisons
  - Portland City Council adopted Socially Responsible Investment Policy to include human rights abuses by corporations like private prisons and their investors
- **2015:**
  - New York State United Teachers adopted a resolution to investigate current pension investments in prisons and to move immediately to divest from prisons
  - Columbia University becomes the very first university in the country to divest its endowment from the private prison industry
  - Wesleyan University announced it has no private prison holdings in response to student pressure



FAU students' "Owlcatraz" campaign keeps GEO's name and money off their campus.  
Photo credit: Palm Beach Post



A coalition of UC Berkeley students, led by the African Black Coalition and MEChA, stage a chain gang to educate the campus on the UC's ties to the prison industrial complex ahead of their successful student senate vote to divest.



After a 16-month campaign, Columbia Prison Divest pressured Columbia University to divest \$10 million of their endowment from Corrections Corp of America and G4S. Photo credit: Columbia Prison Divest



## Prison Profiteers: Corrections Corporation of America & GEO Group

The U.S.-based for-profit prison industry is dominated by two publicly-traded companies: Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and GEO Group (GEO) together control more than 73% of the private prison market in the United States. In 2014, these two companies received \$3.3 billion of our taxpayer dollars for locking our community members behind bars. In the decade prior, they spent over \$45 million on lobbyists and campaign contributions to ensure that our community members would one day live behind their walls. CCA and GEO's business growth is fundamentally dependent upon lobbying strategies that place more people of color under their exploitative control more quickly. CCA and GEO lobby actively to force the criminal system to incarcerate more people—

most often low-income people of color—and the immigration system to detain more people—most often low-income Black and Latino immigrants.

CCA is the largest for-profit prison company in the U.S., operating 60 correctional, detention, and re-entry facilities in 20 states. Since 2012, CCA has been sued for fraudulent understaffing of its facilities, abuse of people who are incarcerated, and medical neglect.

GEO is the second largest private prison company in the U.S., operating 64 correctional and detention facilities in 17 states. GEO also contracts with the federal government to transport people in prison. GEO's subsidiary BI, Inc. electronically shackles immigrants, making GEO a provider of both detention and "alternatives" to detention where it controls whether immigrants will re-enter detention.<sup>1</sup> GEO was dealt a significant blow in 2013 when Florida Atlantic University students refused to accept GEO's money and successfully rallied against the renaming of FAU's stadium after the company.

CCA and GEO are not content with an increase in privatized state prisons or the expansion of immigrant detention. Constantly seeking new growth opportunities, the private prison industry has lobbied for [stricter criminal sentencing laws](#) through their involvement with the [American Legislative Exchange Council](#); [police force expansion](#); and state and federal laws and programs that criminalize immigrants, including [Arizona's SB1070](#) and the [Department of Homeland Security's Operation Streamline](#). GEO Group has also co-opted and commodified [Alternatives to Detention \(ATD\)](#), which is now synonymous with formal electronic



CCA profits by promoting the criminalization of immigrants and people of color. They were active in drafting, lobbying for and promoting Arizona's SB1070 and copycat laws. Photo credit: Brave New Films, Cuéntame, "Immigrants for Sale"



Over 160 people directly impacted by criminalization protested at GEO Group's headquarters in May 2015 at the 3rd Annual National Prison Divestment Campaign convergence. Photo credit: Enlace.

<sup>1</sup> The only ATD program funded by ICE is the Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP) II, a program requiring immigrants to wear an ankle bracelet. Since the program's inception in 2009, ISAP II has been administered by GEO subsidiary Behavioral Interventions (BI) Incorporated. In September 2015, GEO Care, LLC, another GEO subsidiary, was awarded an \$11 million-per-year contract with ICE to establish a new [case management alternative to detention initiative](#) for 1500 families released from detention.

monitoring of immigrants by private prison companies. Alarming, ATDs have become exceedingly popular among politicians and some immigrant rights advocates as a “less costly” and “more humane” option than detention centers. The expansion of ATDs in immigration enforcement parallels the growth of for-profit probation and mental health services in the general prison industry.

Not limited to incarceration, CCA and GEO Group are setting themselves up as the “Wal-Mart” of state control and surveillance—a one stop shop for surveillance and monitoring, incarceration and detention, and “treatment.” In pursuing this all-in-one model, GEO and CCA have expanded their business to run [mental health “treatment” facilities](#). Their expansion into the mental health sector creates a revolving door for many who are criminalized, and furthers their endeavor to offer false solutions that constantly seek new ways to commodify people and social problems. This is a trend some groups are calling the Treatment Industrial Complex.

Private prisons have turned the criminal system into a business where the highest bidder is rewarded and criminalization of our communities is job security. As a stipulation in their contracts for individual prisons, [CCA and GEO typically require 90% of prison beds to be filled](#). Such contract clauses and the millions CCA and GEO spend on lobbying and campaign contributions ensure that state and federal governments work for them to create more criminals and detainable immigrants. Recent studies of private prisons expose that they [purposefully imprison a disproportionate number of people of color in their state facilities](#), and that [they hold people longer than public prisons](#).

CCA and GEO opened the door to privatization of the prison industry when they started operating and lobbying in the 1980s. In their quest for profit at the cost of Black and Brown lives, CCA and GEO continue to open new revolving doors to criminalization. By targeting CCA and GEO, we are strategically building a movement of communities who have been criminalized that is empowered through multiracial, multi-sector relationships and corporate-political analysis to take on corporate drivers of policing, criminalization, incarceration and detention.

## **Money & Mass Incarceration: A Legacy of Corporate Lobbying & Racial Inequity**

CCA and GEO spend millions of dollars lobbying each year for policies that sweep more people of color into jail and detention for longer periods of time. CCA and GEO depend upon their institutional investors for their lobbying efforts. Without the liquid capital CCA and GEO receive from investors, they would not have enough money to lobby for unjust policies. In some cases, their biggest investors actually deploy lobbyists to Capitol Hill and the Department of Homeland Security on behalf of the private prison companies. For example, in 2013, CCA and JPMorgan Chase shared the same lobbyists at the lobbying firm McBee Strategic Consulting LLC.

## **Fueling the Drug War & Longer Sentences**

In the 1990s, the private prison industry and its major investors have successfully lobbied for policies that have resulted in the mass incarceration of people of color. As participants in the Public Safety and Elections Task Force of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), CCA and GEO (formerly Wackenhut Corrections Corporation) advanced laws that increased the time served for drug convictions and other non-violent crimes through [mandatory minimum sentencing](#), three-strikes laws, and truth-in-sentencing laws. These sentencing laws have been disproportionately applied to people of color. While CCA and GEO have been pushed out of ALEC and the Task Force has been disbanded, the two decades reign of mandatory sentencing is largely responsible for creating the current crisis where 160,000 people—or one out of every nine prisoners—are serving life sentences. 37 percent of three-strikes prosecutions are of African-Americans and 33 percent are

of Latinos. These policies have created a system where [there are now more Black people under correctional control—in prison or jail, on probation or parole—than were enslaved in 1850.](#)

### **Caging Immigrants**

While drug laws have long been a major driver in the prison industry, immigration enforcement is now a centerpiece of CCA and GEO's business and lobbying efforts. Since 2002, CCA and GEO have together spent over \$31 million on lobbying the federal government, and an additional \$14 million on campaign contributions. Their investments have paid off. [The U.S. now has a detention bed capacity of 34,000 beds—21,000 of which are privately operated—and a legislated mandate that those beds be filled each night.](#) Secure Communities, a DHS program that directed local law enforcement to collaborate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and its successor, Priority Enforcement Program (PEP-Comm), sweeps even more immigrants into detention centers and deportation proceedings. [CCA and GEO Group recently lobbied around Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#) efforts in 2014. Their efforts were reflected in Senate Bill 744, which would have tripled funding for Operation Streamline in Arizona, and the House's proposed SAFE Act, which significantly increased immigration enforcement. U.S. detention policy has its roots in the anti-Asian racism of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, and is now steered by CCA and GEO.

ICE now spends \$2 billion a year detaining over 400,000 immigrants a year in more than 250 jails and detention centers, and uses GEO subsidiary BI Incorporated to electronically monitor immigrants. More than 40,000 immigrants were monitored by GEO electronic shackles in 2013. The majority of those detained and on GEO ankle bracelets are Latinos. Black immigrants are detained at rates disproportionate to their population size.

### **Creating Crimes: Criminal Prosecution of Immigrants**

CCA and GEO also promote and immensely profit from the criminalization of immigrants. Today, half of the people sentenced to federal prison are Latino. Most of these Latino inmates are convicted of immigration-related crimes, such as illegal entry, a misdemeanor, and illegal re-entry, which is a felony punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison. In 2011, illegal re-entry became the top criminal charge brought by federal prosecutors and accounted for a quarter of all criminal prosecutions filed. In the month of February 2015 alone, there were 5669 new immigration convictions. 96% of those convictions were for illegal entry or illegal re-entry. The Bureau of Prisons sets up contracts with CCA and GEO where people incarcerated for immigration offenses are sent to Criminal Alien Requirement (CAR) facilities run exclusively by private contractors. The criminalization of immigrants has created an enormous financial incentive driving increases in border enforcement and brought CCA and GEO an estimated \$1.3 billion in revenue per year.

These private prison companies, with the help of their powerful shareholders in the financial services sector, reinvest millions of dollars each year in lobbying efforts and campaign contributions to encourage politicians to continue to escalate the criminalization of immigrants and communities of color. Through policies like Operation Streamline, Secure Communities and PEP-Comm, SB1070 copycat laws in various states across the country, and attacks on comprehensive immigration reform, politicians are repaying their debt to their prison-funded campaign contributors. In short, capital infusions from investments as well as the companies' growth fuels lobbying that in turn leads to more people incarcerated and a bigger bottom line for CCA and GEO. At the heart of this are the Million Shares Club, those companies that hold over one million shares of CCA or GEO.



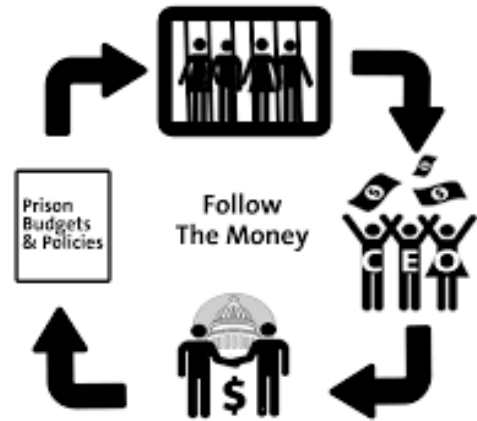
## The Million Shares Club: The Financial Companies that Own CCA & GEO

Without the financial support of major investors, CCA and GEO alone would not be strong enough to successfully lobby for policies that increase the federal government's demand for private prisons. With these powerful allies, however, they have been able to sway public policy in favor of more severe "tough on crime" laws and the increasing criminalization of immigrants.

**The financial services industry now makes up one-third of the US economy, and its members collectively own over two-thirds of CCA and GEO Group.** It is the most powerful lobbying force in both Washington DC and in state governments. To address the root causes of anti-immigrant and other racist legislation, it is imperative that we expose and sever the financial ties that allow shareholders to cash in on the incarceration of immigrants and people of color.

As of June 30, 2015, there are 29 major financial investors that own over one million shares of CCA and GEO combined. By targeting these investors we can show our

rejection of the PIC and use our influence as investors to demand Socially Responsible Investments. The following companies each own over 1 million shares of CCA and GEO, and collectively own over two-thirds of CCA and GEO: (See the updated list at [bit.ly/MillionSharesClub](http://bit.ly/MillionSharesClub))



*Image credit: PICO National Network*

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| x Adage Capital Partners Group LLC        | x Jennison Associates, LLC          |
| x American Century Companies Inc.         | x Lazard Asset Management LLC       |
| x Ameriprise Financial Inc.               | x London Co. Of Virginia            |
| x Bank Of New York Mellon Corp.           | x Managed Account Advisors LLC      |
| x Blackrock Fund Advisors                 | x Neuberger Berman Group LLC        |
| x Cramer Rosenthal McGlynn LLC            | x New South Capital Management Inc. |
| x Diamond Hill Capital Management         | x Northern Trust Corp               |
| x Eagle Asset Management Inc.             | x Nuveen Asset Management LLC       |
| x Epoch Investment Partners, Inc.         | x Principal Financial Group Inc.    |
| x FMR LLC                                 | x Prudential Financial Inc.         |
| x Geode Capital Management, LLC           | x River Road Asset Management, LLC  |
| x Hamlin Capital Management, LLC          | x State Street Corp                 |
| x Hotchkis & Wiley Capital Management LLC | x Vanguard Group Inc.               |
| x ING Investment Management, LLC & Co.    | x Wells Fargo & Company             |
| x Invesco LTD.                            |                                     |

Divestment from these financial services companies because they support CCA and GEO will force them to change their investment practices if they want to continue making a profit. With enough public pressure, these 29 major investors will divest or create portfolio screens shielding their investments from making their way to CCA and GEO. **Once deprived of the financial support of their investors, CCA and GEO will lose capital and with it, their ability to lobby for stricter punishments, anti-immigration laws, and more contracts.**

## The Role of Universities in the National Prison Divest Campaign



Photo credit: Columbia Prison Divest



Photo credit: Fossil Free Stanford

Divestment is an important solidarity tactic organized by individuals with access to wealthy institutions to take a stand against immoral corporations and practices using institutional power. Similar to the African Apartheid divestment campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s, and recent Fossil Fuel divestment campaigns, Prison Divestment is a tactic that creates a moral dilemma within institutions and fights a capitalist economic system through the means it understands best: money.

Universities are key areas for building a base of student activists demanding divestment from their institution. Currently, in the U.S. alone there is over \$500 billion saved in university endowments - an amount that has the potential to have a strong economic impact if divested and to heavily influence political change in a way that's restorative and proactive towards communities most affected (Read: Reinvestment). Winning divestment in universities is not the end goal—after all, if every single university were to divest from for-profit prisons, federal and state prisons and policies that encourage the incarceration of people of color would still exist. It is important to note that **university divestment campaigns are a tactic that serve multiple purposes**. University divestment campaigns:

- a) assist in building mass awareness and a strong base of student leaders, consequently creating stronger ties between campus groups and community groups,
- b) actively pressure schools to take a moral and economic stance against unjust practices, and
- c) build the foundation for the dismantling of the Prison Industrial Complex, the overlapping interest of different institutions and governing bodies that push for criminalization and policing as a solution to political, economic and social problems.

University divestment campaigns are so important and valuable at a national scale. By pressuring institutions that understand profit as their only bottomline, they build power that then works towards addressing broader issues of incarceration, such as the Real Estate Interest Trust tax that allows private prisons to have the same tax deductions as hotels (see sidebar next page), or the giant lobbying power that corporations like CCA and GEO have over Congress and the roles they play in crafting and passing legislation.



While national work is important, specifically important to divestment since it is intentionally attempting to have a national impact (one University divesting a million dollars might sound like a lot, but it is good to remember that private prisons gain billions of dollars in profit each year, through multiple means), it is essential to always keep directly impacted communities and folks at the forefront of the work. For example, Columbia Prison Divest included in its demands an end to Columbia University's role in increased policing and gentrification of Harlem. When a university with a million dollars invested in private prisons decides to divest and reinvest in community businesses or projects, it is the beginning of reimagining a liberation process in our own space.

Building a critical mass of student coalitions is vital to the broader work of ending the coercive power that private prisons have on communities of color and immigrants in the U.S. University campuses can serve as a foundation for students to organize and build policy campaigns focused on driving money out of private prisons and into the hands of communities that are most affected by racism, cissexism, brutality, and criminalization. Student organizing around divestment strengthens community disdain for racist criminal policies as well as financial strategies that maintain private prisons, adding tremendously to the growing chorus of voices fighting for private prison divestment. Students across campuses nationwide have organized to stand up and demand transparency about their university's role in—directly and otherwise—investing in private prisons.



40 Wesleyan students sit-in for divestment from prisons, Israeli occupation and fossil fuels in Spring 2015. Their action led Wesleyan President to immediately investigate the schools holdings in private prisons and publicly state that the University was not invested. *Photo credit: Henry Prine.*

### Real Effing Immoral Tax-free Status a.k.a. Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) Status

In 2013, CCA and GEO were granted Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) status by the IRS, which allows them to avoid paying income taxes. In its inaugural REIT year, CCA received a \$71 million tax break and GEO a \$26 million tax rebate. 90% of their stock market trade income is required to be redistributed to their shareholders, solidifying CCA and GEO's relationship with their Million Shares Club investors. The resulting increase in the price of their stock results in higher revenue: in 2014, the GEO group had a staggering total revenue of \$1.69 billion.

With less money lost to tax payments, prison companies and their investors are better situated with REIT status to profit from the incarceration of people of color and immigrants. The billions in profit and savings without income tax payments enables GEO, CCA and their investors to continue lobbying for racist policies and laws that keep people of color and immigrants behind bars. Eliminating GEO and CCA's REIT status would wipe out the exorbitant funds that support the industry to maintain its prison facilities and meet their quotas for filling beds.



## Picking your targets

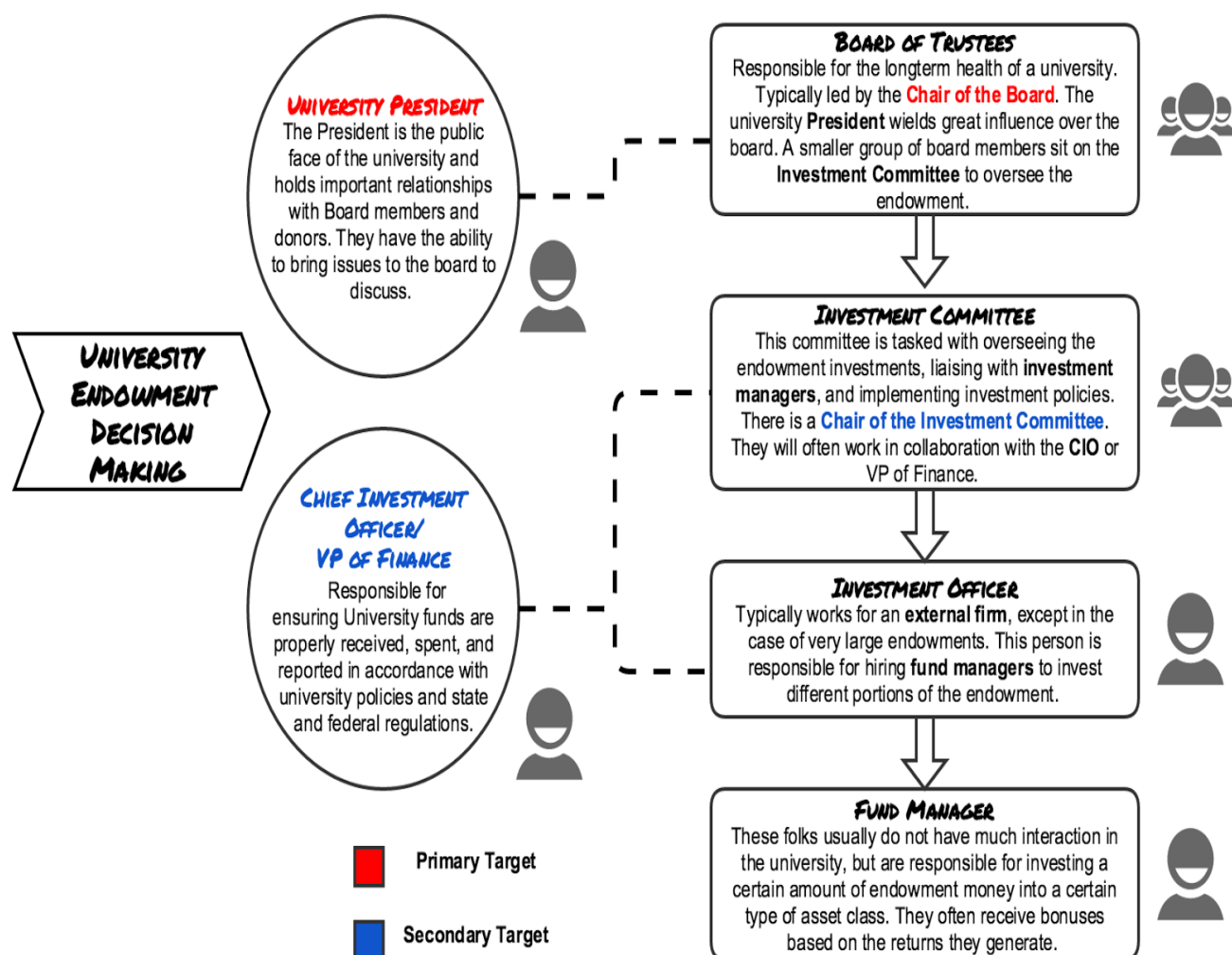
When we are talking about divesting money from the private prison industry, we are talking about money in a **university endowment**. The endowment acts like a savings account for the school. It is a large amount of money that gets invested into different companies, property, and more in order to generate a return. Very little of the money in the endowment gets spent every year, and it's primary function (under capitalism) is to generate more money for the school.

### Picking your target:

Starting your campaign, it is important to figure out who is in a position to meet your demands at the university. In this case, the person who has the power to divest your endowment of private prison companies.

Understanding who controls your school's endowment is often difficult. There are multiple layers of control, which mean multiple points where we can put pressure to win our campaigns.

It is very important, however, to find the **one person** with the ultimate power over your endowment. It is much easier to place pressure on one person than it is on a group of people. This chart shows how decisions about the endowment are made at a university and who you might identify as a primary target (the decision maker) or a secondary target (a person who has influence over your primary target).



While every school is slightly different, the President and the Chair of the Board are often in positions to bring divestment to a vote and can be good **primary targets** because they play very public roles within the school. Some good questions to ask yourself at the beginning of this campaign are:

- Who is this person accountable to? What do they have power over? What constraints do they face?
  - To find this out, see if you can find organizational structure keys in their descriptions on the university website, talk to trusted professors who have been around for a while, brainstorm
- Who supports them/are they well-liked? Who opposes them?
- How do you think they feel about your campaign? What is their history of taking positions on social issues? What is their background (education, faith, politics, profession)?
- How do they respond to pressure in public?
- What connections to corporations that benefit from the incarceration of people of color does this person have?

**Secondary targets** are people who can put a lot of pressure on your primary target. It can be helpful to think about these different constituencies and what power they might hold:

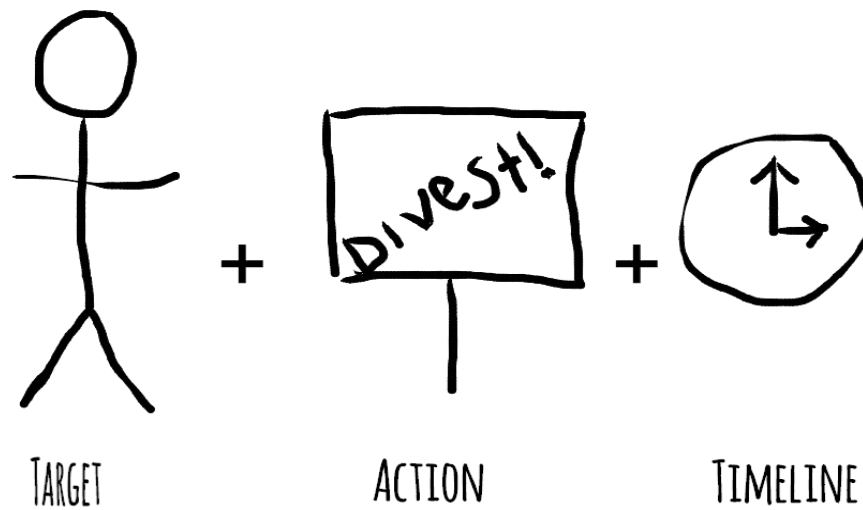
- **Faculty:** Is there a faculty council or union? Who has tenure? Are there famous or well-known faculty who are experts on your issue?
- **Staff:** Is the president's office staff allied with prison divestment? Do people like the Dean of Students have sway over your target?
- **Alumni and Donors:** Are there any alums who were part of South African anti-apartheid divestment campaigns in the past? Are there donors who have spoken out about mass incarceration or immigrant detention?



Members of the Columbia Prison Divest campaign hold up signs during a University Senate meeting. During their 16-month campaign, Columbia Prison Divest strategically targeted Columbia University President after systematically targeting every level of university control over the endowment . Photo credit: Columbia Prison Divest

## Setting Demands

**Campaign demands** are made up of three parts: a target, an action, and a timeline:



The overarching, long term demand of this campaign is:

**[Your target]** will **commit to divest** direct stock holdings in private prison companies (including CCA, GEO, and G4S) and implement a screen to stop any future investments in these companies **within** [decide a period of time by which you want this completed].

Additional demands you might consider include:

1. Divest indirect holdings (often money invested through mutual funds and hedge funds) of private prison companies (CUNY has roughly \$250,000 worth of stock in G4S held through an out-of-house investment manager, the Tweedy Browne Global Value fund)
2. Have the university put pressure on the “Million Shares Club,” or wall street banks that invest over a million shares in both CCA and GEO Group, to divest. (For a full list of Million Shares Club members, go to [bit.ly/MillionSharesClub](http://bit.ly/MillionSharesClub) )
3. Reinvest 1% of the endowment in supporting businesses run by formerly incarcerated people, or initiatives that interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.
4. Public statement against private prisons, etc.

Your demands may also reflect specific campus actions.

- Many schools are also working to ban the check box on university admissions and hiring forms that asks if the applicant has a criminal record. For more information on ban the box check out: <http://bantheboxcampaign.org/>

It can often feel like you need a ton of information about how your university is invested before you can get started, however that is not the case! Your university is connected to the private prison industry either directly or through one of the Million Shares club members. The most important thing to have when starting your campaign is a solid group of people who are committed to stopping the growth of the prison industrial complex.

If you are starting a campaign, get in contact with a staff member at REC or Enlace to get connected with other campus campaigns working on private prison divestment. You can email us at [organize@endowmentethics.org](mailto:organize@endowmentethics.org) or [info@enlaceintl.org](mailto:info@enlaceintl.org).



*Not all campuses have the organizing capacity to take on their university's endowments, but all campuses have a role in the #prisondivest movement to expose and cut college connections to the private prison industry. Divest from Detention is a strategy useful on commuter campuses, where organizing capacity may be limited, or where you need to build capacity to take on the university's endowments.*

## **Divest from Detention! Invest in Communities!**

*Changing the Conversation of Wells Fargo and commercial banks on your campus*

TIGRA's campus campaign focuses on how students and communities can use their economic power (e.g. having student accounts at Wells Fargo or related bank) to revisit partnerships on your campus that may be aiding in the prison industrial complex. This campaign can both create a conversation to divest out of harmful industries and invest in your local economy.

### **Step 1: Finding Core Committee Members to explore issue**

Find out who already works on similar issues of immigrant rights, criminal justice, campus budgets or tuition cuts - students that may share the same values of either supporting or advocating for people most affected by the private detention system (undocumented families) or students who care about where their money is going within their school. If your campus has the Wells Fargo card, find out who has Wells Fargo bank accounts: they will be the users with the most sway.

- *Step 1A: Find students most affected by Wells Fargo partnerships and allies*
  - Identify student allies interested in the issue
  - Identify professors or departments working on social justice (Ethnic Studies, Chicana Studies)
- *Step 1B: Build your Organizing Committee*
  - Start recruiting to create a local committee!
    - Recruitment Tactic #1 - Create a survey for students using Wells Fargo's student ID and Debit Card
    - Recruitment Tactic #2 - Create a focus group to breakdown connections of Wells Fargo's partnership with your school

### **Step 2: Build your Base for your first Action by obtaining a copy of your school's contract with Wells Fargo**

Now that you have a Core Committee, it's time to build a broader base of student interest on Wells Fargo's private prison investments and your local campus connection to that system.

- Recruitment Tactic #1- Host Film discussion on private detention industrial complex
- *Step #2A – Conduct A Power Analysis-* Find out which campus department developed the campus card and Wells Fargo banking partnership. Start by finding your campus' organizational chart.
- *Step #2B Plan Your First Action-* Organize an accountability meeting with your school's Business Development or School Procurement Director regarding Wells Fargo Debit Card and Student ID. Publicly request in writing to see campus contract with Wells Fargo to understand how much money is made within partnership.

### Step 3: Organize student/community alliances to understand detention issues and find alternative banking with ethical standards

To make your campaign sustainable and accountable, create alliances outside your campus with local immigrant rights and criminal justice groups who work on issues related to local private or government detention facilities. In working together, identify how your demands from both the community and campus can overlap to support local economies, reinvest in impacted communities, and cut ties to private prisons.

- Recruitment Tactic #1 - Conduct a “Protecting Families Tour” - Find organizations who are already working with people incarcerated within detention facilities (e.g. Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC)).

Connect students to community issues happening around your campus:

- Research 1 – Find out the terrain of alternative, ethical banking (credit unions, regional banks) in your area
- Internal Action – Create Ethical Banking Standards most important to students and community members

### Step 4: Plan Accountability Action with Wells Fargo and or related commercial bank

Now that you have educated both the campus and community, obtained the official contract on what revenues are going towards the school, and built a base of Wells Fargo account holders, you have developed **leverage** to flex your economic power!

- Step 4A: Identify local branch and demand to cut off all detention investments, share Ethical Banking Standards
- Step4B: Plan a “Move Your Money Day” where student account holders collectively move Wells Fargo Bank accounts to an ethical bank
- Step4C: Celebrate the amount of divestment dollars students collectively taken out of the prison industry!

### Step 5: Demand University cut ties with Banks investing in prisons

Successfully pushing a bank branch off campus is a huge feat, and puts your organization in a powerful position to make further demands on the university to cut off endowment investments in private prisons and the Million Shares Club.

For More information, visit [www.transnationalaction.org](http://www.transnationalaction.org)



Photo credit: Portland Central America Solidarity Committee



## Student Organizing Results in Columbia University Becoming First to Divest from Private Prison Industry



On June 22, 2015, following sixteen months of relentless student activism, the Columbia University Board of Trustees announced its decision to divest from the private prison industry and institute a policy banning reinvestment in companies that operate prisons. This decision makes Columbia the very first university to divest from the private prison industry.

*“We targeted the university’s investments in two private prison companies, but we hope that private prison divestment campaigns, with the abolitionist vision of a larger anti-prison movement, can help us start working towards divesting from the idea that prisons equal justice, which we believe to be fundamentally racist.” - Dunni Oduyemi*

The Columbia Prison Divest campaign was launched in February 2014 by Students Against Mass Incarceration, a Black-led prison abolitionist student group, after students discovered that approximately \$10 million of Columbia University’s endowment was invested in two for-profit prison companies: the Corrections Corporation of America and G4S. CCA, GEO Group, and G4S have played major, active roles in pushing for legislation that further criminalizes marginalized communities such as mandatory minimum laws and Arizona’s infamous SB1070 statute. Alumni, faculty, staff, and West Harlem community members came together to support the student-run campaign demanding immediate divestment from these companies and a permanent negative screen against any future investments.

*“My involvement in this campaign has been about acknowledging my complicity in racist systems of incarceration and policing. As a student at an elite university, I have a choice to quietly benefit or take the opportunity to leverage my privilege to hold my school accountable” - Ella Every-Wortman, student organizer*

*“These companies have a fundamental interest in expanding incarceration in order to maximize profit. We will not see an end to the racism and exploitation embedded in our contemporary systems of mass incarceration and detention if we do not dismantle the economic engines of this prison-industrial complex.” - Gabriela Catalina Pelsinger, student organizer*

Prison Divest is a strategy born out of collaboration between immigrant justice and anti-mass incarceration organizers in a common fight against the criminalization of marginalized communities. Student organizers have situated prison divestment in the context of broader visions for change. Through their actions, political education, and avid social media presence, Columbia Prison Divest has tied their work to the Black Lives Matter movement, anti-gentrification efforts in West Harlem,

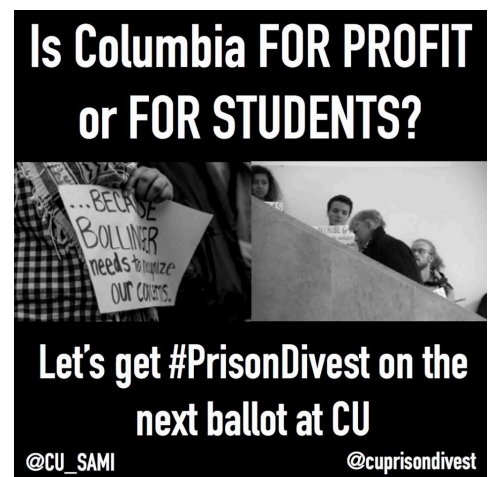
the movement to divest from the Israeli police state, and activism against immigrant detention and the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border.

*"Universities investing in prisons reinforce systems of inequality that allow only some to succeed. As a Black student, I know that Columbia is actively doing violence against people that look like me in a number of ways. I refuse to be just another brown face in a college brochure that my school can use to mask the systemic racism it participates in."* - Asha Rosa, student organizer

*"From the start we wanted to establish those links that what's happening globally is happening domestically"- Imani Brown, alum and former organizer*

*"For us, prison divestment has been an entry point for addressing the ways in which students at elite colleges and universities are directly and specifically in the privileged positions that we are because of systems of inequality. The racist, classist images of "criminals deserving of punishment" are created in tandem with images of "hard-working college students deserving of opportunity," and each is defined in relation to the other. Through prison divestment, we have worked to challenge these narratives and structures. We refuse to buy into the false narratives that justify our privilege at the expense of the suffering of others. We hope this victory opens doors to more campaigns, to more organizing, to more victories. This is not the end. This is a beginning"- Columbia Prison Divest campaign organizers*

There are over a dozen active prison divestment campaigns on college campuses across the United States. Notable victories in prison divest organizing include United Methodist Church's divestment from CCA and GEO Group and the Gates' Foundation's divestment from G4S.



## Columbia Prison Divest Timeline

- **December 2013** A group of students discovered that, as of June 30, 2013, Columbia University had \$10 million invested in the private prison industry
- **February 3, 2014** Students delivered a letter President Bollinger's office requesting a meeting to hear their concerns regarding the university's investment in private prisons and officially launching the Columbia Prison Divest (CPD) campaign demanding divestment
- **April 8, 2014** CPD presents their case for prison divestment to the university's Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing (ACSRI) for the first time

- **April 14-18, 2014** CPD held a week of engagement “People, Prisons & Profit” in solidarity with other campaigns across the nation
- **April 16, 2014** CPD delivered second letter to President Bollinger demanding immediate action
- **September 26, 2014** Students rallied outside of World Leader’s Forum Event “Children in the Age of Sustainable Development” on Columbia’s campus drawing attention to the unsustainability of mass incarceration and its impact on youth
- **October 22, 2014** As a part of the National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, students held a silent protest outside of President Bollinger’s class
- **November 11, 2014** After multiple delays, members of CPD present to the ACSRI for a second time to an almost entirely new committee
- **November 24, 2014** President Bollinger meets with CPD for the first time
- **January 20, 2015** ACSRI hosts Community Engagement Panel on Private Prison Divestment where students voiced their overwhelming support for divestment
- **March 30, 2015** University Senate Student Affairs Committee, representing all 26 graduate and undergraduate schools, voted to call upon the university to divest
- **March 31, 2015** ACSRI voted unanimously to recommend divestment to Board of Trustees
- **April 2, 2015** Students held a silent protest at the University Senate Plenary calling on the Board of Trustees to act immediately following the votes from the Senate and ACSRI
- **April 19-25, 2015** CPD held second Week of Engagement “Divestment Pending Abolition”
- **April 24, 2015** CPD and supporters staged a day-long sit-in outside the President’s office demanding he respond to the recent votes and put divestment on the Board of Trustees agenda for their next meeting
- **April 27, 2015** CPD organizers meet with President Bollinger the second time
- **May 15, 2015** In an email, President Bollinger announced his personal support for prison divestment and confirmed that the issue would be taken up at the next scheduled Board of Trustees meeting in June
- **June 22, 2015** Board of Trustees announces decision to divest from private prison industry

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## A Legacy of Divestment

This present campaign for prison divestment is part of a long history of students fighting against injustice through divestment campaigns. The campaign for divestment from South Africa spanned decades and was no easy task, but by the 1990s students at universities across the country pressured their student governments into pulling away financial support for the apartheid regime. Those divestment campaigns laid the groundwork for international sanctions against apartheid; the voice of the people spoke clearly against injustice. Students have, at other times, fought against the brutal genocide in Sudan, and built divestment campaigns that attacked corporations supporting the government in Khartoum. In California, the UC campaign led to the state of California divesting its pensions, some of the largest in the country, from Sudan. And finally, alongside our own campaigns against private prisons, students across the country have fought against the Israeli Occupation through participation in the campaign for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions, pushing their university funds to divest from companies that benefit from the occupation, like SodaStream and Caterpillar. Each one of these campaigns had students at the forefront pushing for radical change and bringing to the fore issues that might have otherwise been kept out of the spotlight. In doing our work against the private prison industry we are continuing to fight against injustice, bringing the crises of Mass Incarceration and Mass Deportation into public awareness. **We will win.**

