

Detention Corporations' Influence: Financial Contributions and Contracts Within Politics

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Honors Thesis

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March 15, 2023

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to understand the ways in which large corporations that are involved in the detention and alternatives to detention (ATDs) business seek to influence the political process through campaign donations in Washington state. We know that large corporations are taking advantage of technological alternatives to detention, but we do not know much about corporate involvement and influence in politicians' voting on state level immigration policies that perpetuates further immigration oppression.

In this thesis, I first identified the major players in the detention and alternatives to detention (ATDs) industry, and the connections between them. Second, I examined their financial contributions to Washington state politicians compared to other state politicians. I found that while GEO Group, Inc. and CoreCivic, Inc. have donated to Washington state politicians, the total is less than what was donated to politicians in other states. This is an unexpected finding, as many of those states are similar to Washington state - either also having just one GEO Group, Inc or CoreCivic, Inc owned facility or none at all. Only CoreCivic, Inc modestly donated to Washington state party committees. Future research is required to further examine what encourages higher financial contribution to those states compared to Washington state, and whether the contributions correlate with actual political influence on bills related to immigration enforcement.

INTRODUCTION

Companies often donate to politicians or contribute to politics to amass influence and power. Interested in the money entrenchment within the exploitative detention industry, I researched the financial political contributions GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc made as

major detention industry players, beginning in the context of Washington state but also comparatively to other involved states nationwide. I set out to answer three related research questions: How do large detention companies seek to influence the political process in Washington state? More specifically: (1) Which detention corporations made the largest contributions to Washington state politicians? (2) How much have these corporations donated, to which politicians, and when?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous researchers have tackled the expansion of private detention and alternatives to detention (ATDs) within the frameworks of racial capitalism and the prison industrial complex (Collingwood et. al, 2018; Chong, 2022; Morín et. al, 2021; Doty and Wheatley, 2013; and Ackerman and Furman, 2013). Legal loopholes and political discretion render massive profiting easier, as justified and perpetuated by racialized and criminalized xenophobia. For instance, Collingwood et. al theorizes how the profiting of a carceral market expands into other markets, which includes the private detention and ATDs. In this context, as Chong describes, alternatives to detention such as forms of electronic surveillance and control may seem to offer reforms, but in fact only deepen the profit making incentives of the immigration industrial complex (Doty and Wheatley, 2013). This system is upheld through influence peddling and the purchasing of access to politicians.. Based on the connected conclusions between Collingwood et. al, Chong, and Doty and Wheatly, they would agree that large private detention corporations' financial contributions influence anti-immigration policymaking, leading to the expansion of the detention regime.

As policies increasing detention are one form of tough immigration policies, the benefits are for those in power within the systems and institutions, never migrants themselves that

essentially bring in the profit, whether through their extracted labor or their monetized existence in the detention centers (Burkhardt, 2019). The risks Burkhardt alludes to are the migrants' lives. Despite human rights violations, private detention corporations are still constantly interested in influencing governmental policy to support their profiting expansions (Morín et. al, 2021). Considering Morín et. al's findings, it suggests that it is very likely that private detention corporations use political contributions to secure support for policies that expand their profit.

Gomez and Cataldo analyze private detention corporations' sheer hyper-politicization, describing how their stocks rose as Trump made anti-immigrant claims and led to their donating to Trump's campaign (2016). However, immigration oppression and private detention profiting efforts exist and persist in both political parties (Gomez and Cataldo, 2016; Chong, 2022; Walker and Rea, 2014). Detention corporations are also likely to contribute to Democratic representatives to secure their support (Morín et. al, 2021).

In policymaking, private detention corporations like The GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc take part in drafting and sponsoring tough and anti- immigration bills, such as Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 that builds upon the War on Drugs and War on Terror racialized criminalization as a premise to sentence and detain migrants (Saldivar and Price, 2015). 90% of both corporations' lobbying money went into 36 other states' legislatures paralleling Arizona's SB 1070 (Saldivar and Price, 2015). However, big money is necessary yet difficult to follow (Gomez and Cataldo, 2016). Much of the entrenched big money and continued politicized profiting of private detention stem from legalized streams of allowing dark money and gray money and loosening restricting regulations. Under *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976), *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission* (1995), *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010), and many other rulings, all retract or remove

a disclosure or disclaimer requirement (Wood, 2018; Bombardini and Trebbi, 2020; and Walker and Rea, 2014). Together, political contributions are easily concealed and swept away.

METHODS

Due to the secrecy surrounding this industry, simply identifying its major players, the relationships between them, and their connections to politicians in our state requires complex research. For this thesis, I consulted business databases D&B Hoovers and Mergent Online to identify details about major detention and ATD corporations and unravel the relationships between them. Because some companies are subsidiaries of others and most are privately held, there is limited public information about their relationships, yet these details are important to understand. I also found relevant articles, both scholarly and non-scholarly, that explored connections between those corporations in the detention industry. Lastly, I used the government-spending database USA Spending to learn about government contracts to corporations profiting from detention and ATDs.

On D&B Hoovers, I began identifying major detention corporations with The GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc as searching start points since they are known duo-polizers of the private prison, detention, and even ATD industries; the major ankle bracelet company BI Incorporated is a subsidiary of GEO Group. Through D&B Hoovers, I found corporations considered as GEO Group's top competitors, in the same industries as GEO Group, BI Incorporated's top competitors, in the same industries as BI Incorporated, and correspondingly so under their company linkage maps. Then, I contextually identified whether or not these new corporations I found are actually involved in ATDs or broadly speaking private detention with D&B Hoovers' information.

After gathering information to establish these corporate relationships and possible correlations to detention and ATD industries, I used [Mergent Online](#) to cross check my previous contextual conclusions from D&B Hoovers. This extensive process also clarifies whether the major ATD companies are subsidiaries of detention companies and shows which corporations are major players in the ATD industry and their relations to major players in the overall private detention industry. One company I identified as an exception to this process is Harris Corporation, as I found it through ACLU articles discussing their contribution to ICE's cellular tracking technology.

After identifying the major companies, I then used OpenSecrets and Washington State Public Disclosure Commission to find donations to politicians and lobbying activities that major private detention corporations conducted in Washington. Under the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission's Political Disclosure Reporting Data's Contributions section, I searched for "geo group" and "corecivic" under the "Contributor" filter. In the Lobbyist section, I searched for "geo group" and "corecivic" under the "Lobbying Client" filter. On OpenSecrets' Donor Lookup database, I searched up "geo group" and "corecivic" separately and examined each corporation's first 500 donations to politicians, parties, and committees. Afterwards, I cross checked my findings with the full donation records from FollowTheMoney's data.

DATA FINDINGS

Who are the top corporations profiting from immigrant detention in the contemporary USA?

The GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc are the top two corporations profiting from immigration detention. According to the ACLU, "in the past several years contracts for ICE detention made up approximately 25 percent of total revenue for both CoreCivic and the GEO

Group” (Cho, 2021). \$574 million of CoreCivic’s revenue came from ICE detention contracts in 2019, \$533 million in 2020, and GEO Group received \$708 million and \$662 million respectively (Cho, 2021). The GEO Group Inc has \$2.35 billion in sales, \$4.46 billion in total assets, and \$1.06 billion in market value (D&B Hoovers, n.d.d), while CoreCivic, Inc has \$1.86 billion in sales, \$3.28 billion in total assets, and \$1.11 billion in market value (D&B Hoovers, n.d.a).

Deeper dive on GEO Group, Inc

Formed as a division of The Wackenhut Corporation to focus on correctional service development for governmental agencies, The GEO Group, Inc became independent and expanded itself internationally with GEO Australia in 1992, joint ventures in UK in 1992 and South Africa in 1992, and merging with UK’s G4S in 2002 to form its own independent corporation in 2003 (The GEO Group, n.d.a). From the 450 total contracts summing up to \$1 billion in 2022 (USASpending, n.d.26), The GEO Group, Inc has 142 contracts with the Department of Homeland Security⁶ that all regard to some aspect of detention either facilities themselves, management, services, etc (USASpending, n.d.2). Of the 142 contracts with DHS, only nine contracts are active, totaling \$149,966,065 in funds obligated to date but a potential total of \$176,904,511 over the course of the contracts (USASpending, n.d.2). For instance, DHS awards The GEO Group Inc beginning December 20, 2021 until December 19, 2022 \$118.9 million upon a “task order to provide detention services in Los Angeles area of responsibility” under the industry classification of 561612: security guards and patrol services (USASpending, n.d.16). Another contract from September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023 classified under security guards and patrol services promises \$38.9 million for detention and transportation services in

ICE's Miami Area of Responsibility (USASpending, n.d.20). A \$12.3 million contract beginning August 18, 2022 and ending on August 17, 2023 funds a "new task order" for facilities support services based upon the contract period of performance for the Montgomery Processing Center in Texas (USASpending, n.d.21). A similar one for \$5.8 million is awarded specifically a "new task order for detention, transportation and medical services for Denver (Aurora) Contract Detention Facility" from October 16, 2022 to October 15, 2023 (USASpending, n.d.23). \$987,051 was promised from May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2023 for more detention and jail space for the "RGV Sector" (USASpending, n.d.27). \$2.7 million was awarded so far from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023 to fund the Rio Grande Facility (USASpending, n.d.5) and \$69,000 was awarded so far from July 23, 2022 to July 22, 2023 on "detainee bed days at the Robert A. Deyton Detention Facility" in Georgia (USASpending, n.d.17), while \$16,067 promised from October 27, 2020 to October 26, 2025 for detainee housing cost in relation to emergency weather situations (USASpending, n.d.28) and \$600 was awarded so far from April 11, 2018 to October 11, 2029 for the Houston Detention Facility (USASpending, n.d.14).

ICE/DHS is not the GEO Group's only client; the company also has many contracts with the Department of Justice to operate federal prisons of the criminal legal system. The Department of Justice agreed to disperse \$200.7 million from July 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022 for The GEO Group, Inc on "perform[ing] detention services for Western region detention" (USASpending, n.d.13). One contract from April 20, 2007 to September 30, 2028 with the DOJ holds \$631.3 million for detention services in San Diego (USASpending, n.d.8). Another contract with the DOJ of \$423.8 million prevails from January 9, 2008 to January 28, 2028 (USASpending, n.d.9). While each contract contains different specific goals, detention profiting is still influenced even from the pipeline of the prison-industrial complex.

Deeper dive on CoreCivic, Inc

With 74 prisons and jails totalling a 74,957 bed capacity, CoreCivic Inc (formerly Corrections Corporation of America) is the “largest owner of private prisons” and “second-largest private prison operator, after GEO Group” (American Friends Service Committee). CoreCivic Inc has 160 contracts (USASpending, n.d.7) and three of 87 with the DHS are active (USASpending, n.d.1). \$7.8 million is awarded from August 1, 2022 to July 31, 2023 for T.Don Hutto Detention in Texas (USASpending, n.d.19), \$11.7 million is awarded from August 18, 2022 to August 17, 2023 for the Houston Contract Detention Facility (USASpending, n.d.22), and \$69.8 million is awarded from December 20, 2021 to December 19, 2022 for the Otay Mesa Detention Center (USASpending, n.d.15) Three of the six total active contracts are signed with DOJ, though they still retain detention services, etc- \$435.8 million from May 19, 2008 to September 30, 2030 for detention services in Las Vegas (USASpending, n.d.10), \$62.5 million from March 20, 2010 to February 4, 2030 for detention services in Texas (USASpending, n.d.11), and another \$34.9 million is promised from December 20, 2021 to December 19, 2022 for Otay Mesa Detention Center (USASpending, n.d.12). Similar to The GEO Group Inc, virtually all contracts with DHS surround detention and even some contracts with DOJ do as well (USASpending, n.d.1). CoreCivic’s contracts with DHS add up to a total dollar value of \$89,390,378.00 and when including the three detention-related contracts with DOJ, it increases up to \$622,557,015.89 potentially.

Are the major ATD companies subsidiaries of detention companies? Who are the major players in the ATD industry, and how are they related to the major players in the private detention industry?

Companies involved in alternatives to detention (ATDs) are widespread in various areas of manufacturing and reselling, etc. Most manufacturing and reselling companies partner with or are acquired by larger corporations. Most major ATD companies are subsidiaries of major detention companies; for example, BI Incorporated, a major ankle bracelet company, is a subsidiary of the GEO Group Inc. “BI was awarded a \$2.2 billion federal contract in 2020 to administer [alternatives to detention] programs, according to federal contracting records. CoreCivic disputed the contract, saying it had proposed a lower price for the service, a subsequent U.S. government report said - a sign of growing competition in the market of remote monitoring” (CNBC, 2022). In other cases, major ATD companies are actually just generalized technology/security companies that have other major non-ATD products. G4S Secure Solutions (USA) Inc the U.S. unit of G4S Limited, Stanley Security Solutions, Inc, and Harris Corporation also known as L3Harris Technologies, Inc are examples of subsidiaries of major detention corporations or corporations that just produce a component of the detention or ATDs world (D&B Hoovers, n.d.).

G4S Secure Solutions (USA) Inc has \$1.75 billion in sales and \$0.87 billion in total assets (D&B Hoovers, n.d.2). G4S Secure Solutions (USA) Inc currently has two contracts active with DHS: \$5.5 million from January 9, 2020 to July 31, 2023 for detention officers’ transportation services (USASpending, n.d.6) and \$287,196 from December 28, 2021 to December 27, 2022 for Homeland Security Investigations in San Antonio, Texas (USASpending, n.d.18). All of the other contracts between G4S and DHS are for armed guard and transportation

services for detention (USASpending, n.d.3). The sole active contract Stanley Security Solutions Inc has with DHS is for \$45,667 from October 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022 for new security cameras and biometric fingerprint readers installed at the Coast Guard Sector in Florida (USASpending, n.d.25). Other contracts are sparsely around security- door keys and locks, maintenance, systems, etc (USASpending, n.d.4). The Harris Corporation with \$17.81 billion sales, \$34.71 billion total assets, and \$47.60 billion market value (D&B Hoovers, n.d.3), has a \$4.3 million contract with DHS from September 22, 2022 to September 22, 2023 for “equipment to determine the location of targeted mobile handsets to investigate crimes and threats” listed under 334220: radio and television broadcasting and wireless communications equipment manufacturing as well as product/service 5825: radio navigation equipment (USASpending, n.d.24). Both contracts align with Harris Corporation’s production of Stingrays, a form of “invasive cell phone surveillance technology,” as ACLU states (Ramirez, 2020).

Connecting my findings on D&B Hoovers and USASpending together, The GEO Group Inc and CoreCivic Inc are the two corporations essentially duopolizing US immigrant detention. The GEO Group Inc’s active contracts with DHS amount from \$150 to \$177 million, and including their active detention contracts with DOJ, it extends up to \$1.5 billion (USASpending, n.d.26). As for CoreCivic Inc, active contracts with DHS total at \$89 million and including active contracts with DOJ, the amount increases up to \$622 million. G4S Limited qualifies as a substantial player in the private detention industry with \$5.7 million involved (USASpending, n.d.3). While most ATD companies are subsidiaries of The GEO Group Inc like BI Incorporated and CoreCivic, L3Harris Technologies, Inc’s “stingray” and “crossbow” cellphone tracking and other radio surveillance production is a substantial player in the ATD industry with \$4.3 million involved (D&B Hoovers, n.d.2).

GEO Group, Inc's and CoreCivic, Inc's direct donations to Washington state candidates

Given that Washington state has been the site of major legislative battles around immigrant detention – including legislation introduced in 2019 and 2020 to shut down GEO Group's Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma – it was surprising to find relatively few donations by major detention companies to Washington state politicians. Of the 2,298 donations amounting \$3 million to politicians within FollowTheMoney's state data, only one was made to a Washington state politician- \$100 to Republican William R. Clevenger on August 24, 1998, who subsequently lost his race (FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.4). GEO Group, Inc has not made any donations to any Washington state politicians that are holding office in 2023 (FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.4). Under the Washington state's Public Disclosure Commission, the only politician GEO Group, Inc donated to is Laurie Jenkins in 2005 with \$500 (Public Disclosure Commission, n.d.1). Afterwards, she voted against Washington state's HB 1090 bill (2021-2022) to ban for-profit detention. However, it is difficult to prove whether the \$500 she received actually influenced her stance with immigration and detention in GEO Group, Inc in a vote that occurred almost 15 years after she received the donation.

As for CoreCivic, Inc on FollowTheMoney.org records, 2,906 donations total \$2.8 million. There were no donations on PDC records and numerous on OpenSecrets and FollowTheMoney. From 2004 to 2006, CoreCivic, Inc donated \$5,800 to 11 Washington politicians (FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.2):

- Republican candidate Dino J. Rossi received a \$1,350 donation on October 4, 2004.

- Democratic Governor Christine O. Gregoire received a \$1,350 donation on October 8, 2004, another \$500 on December 7, 2005, another \$1,400 on November 8, 2007, and another \$200 on June 19, 2008.
- Republican Michael D. Hewett from Senate District 016 received a \$200 donation on December 2, 2005.
- Democratic Allister H. O'Brien from Senate District 042 received a \$200 donation on December 7, 2005 and another \$200 on August 5, 2006.
- Republican Fred Jarrett from House District 041 received a \$200 donation on December 9, 2005 and another \$200 on July 31, 2006.
- Republican candidate Luke E. Esser received a \$300 donation on August 12, 2006.
- Democratic Helen E. Sommers from House District 036 received a \$200 donation on August 14, 2006.
- District 12's Republican House Representative Michael D. Armstrong received a \$200 donation on August 17, 2006.
- District 16's Democratic House Representative William A. Grant received a \$200 donation on August 17, 2006.
- Democratic Lynn E. Kessler from House District 024 received a \$200 donation on August 18, 2006.
- Republican Dale E. Brandland from Senate District 042 received a \$300 donation on August 21, 2006.
- Republican Gary C. Alexander from House District 020 received a \$200 donation on September 21, 2006 and another \$200 on September 26, 2006.

- Republican Marian Cooksey from House District 039 received a \$200 donation on June 19, 2008.

GEO Group, Inc's and CoreCivic, Inc's contributions to party committees within states

GEO Group, Inc made no donations to Washington state party committees. On the other hand, CoreCivic, Inc made 25 donations totalling \$18,800 to Washington state party committees (FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.1):

- The Washington State Democratic Party received \$1,000 on May 22, 2007, \$1,000 on December 15, 2008, and another \$1,000 on December 7, 2009 (\$3,000 total).
- The House Republican Organization Committee of Washington received \$675 on October 28, 2004, \$700 on August 1, 2006, \$700 on October 2, 2007, \$800 on April 28, 2008, and another \$800 on August 3, 2010 (\$3,675 total).
- The House Democratic Campaign Committee of Washington received \$675 on October 29, 2004, \$675 on April 4, 2005, \$700 on August 3, 2006, \$700 on September 27, 2007, and another \$800 on May 8, 2008 (\$3,550 total).
- The Senate Republican Campaign Committee received \$675 on October 28, 2004, \$700 on August 14, 2006, \$700 on November 30, 2007, and \$800 on May 8, 2008 (\$2,875 total).
- The Senate Democratic Campaign Committee of Washington received \$675 on October 27, 2004, \$675 on February 4, 2005, \$700 on August 11, 2006, \$700 on September 27, 2007, \$800 on September 30, 2008, and another \$800 on July 1, 2010 (\$4,350 total).

GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc lobbying in Washington state

In addition to campaign donations to individual politicians, however, companies also seek to shape policy in their favor by paying for lobbyists to influence officials once they have been elected. I consulted data provided by Washington state's Public Disclosure Commission to examine the extent to which GEO and CoreCivic hired lobbyists to advance their interests. The data reveals that GEO Group, Inc contracted Stauffacher Communication to lobby representing them throughout 2021 and 2022 over the listed issue: correctional facilities, land use, and private correctional facility operations to Washington state's House and Senate committees (Public Disclosure Commission, n.d.2). Stauffacher Communications received \$7,000 in every month of 2021 and 2022, adding up to \$84,000 per year and \$168,000 in total, from GEO (Public Disclosure Commission, n.d.2).

CoreCivic, on the other hand, hired Bogard & Johnson LLC to represent them in 2016 (Public Disclosure Commission, n.d.2). CoreCivic, Inc paid Bogard & Johnson LLC \$1,500 every month, totaling \$18,000 for the entire year (Public Disclosure Commission, n.d.2). Andrea Evans also represented CoreCivic, Inc from January 2016 to December 2017 (Public Disclosure Commission, n.d.2). Unlike Bogard & Johnson LLC, Evans is either affiliated with or a part of CoreCivic, Inc, as their point of contact is a CCA (CoreCivic, Inc's old corporation name) email address (Public Disclosure Commission, n.d.2). Evans is given \$1,666 per month, totaling \$39,984 during the span of 2016 and 2017 (Public Disclosure Commission, n.d.2).

DATA FINDINGS PART 2: ANALYSIS

Washington state in comparison to other states that received donations

As the above findings show, both GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc have donated to Washington state politicians and conducted lobbying within Washington state, though in relatively modest amounts. To try to understand this, I compared both companies' Washington state donations to their contributions to politicians in other states, finding that both companies have comparatively donated more in size and quantity to other states' state politicians.

GEO Group, Inc has made many thousand and ten thousand dollar donations to politicians in California, Florida, Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Jersey, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Mexico from 2019 to 2022 (OpenSecrets, n.d.2; FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.4). Similarly, CoreCivic, Inc has made many thousand and ten thousand dollar donations to state politicians in Tennessee, New Mexico, Georgia, Colorado, Montana, Kansas, Kentucky, and California (OpenSecrets, n.d.3).

GEO Group, Inc donated the most to Florida in terms of overall spending as well as frequency of expenditures (FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.4), likely due to its headquarters being located there. CoreCivic, Inc, similarly, donated the most (in terms of total expenditures and frequency of donations) in Tennessee, where it is headquartered (FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.4). Comparing the broader donation dynamics between GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc, GEO Group, Inc has donated \$231,384 more than CoreCivic, Inc to candidates across states and \$6,072,269 more to party committees mainly towards Florida state. (FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.3,4). However, CoreCivic, Inc has made 608 more donations than GEO Group, Inc. One possible explanation why GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc donate more to other states'

politicians compared to Washington state's politicians could be the amount of facilities in those other states being higher than Washington state's.

To explore the possibility that they focused their donations in states where they had or sought detention contracts, I compiled data on each company's total spending, number of donations, and number of detention contracts per state, as seen in the figure below.

All of GEO Group, Inc's donations within states

<u>State</u> (30 states for selected offices and 17 states for party committees)	<u>Total Donated to Candidates</u> (\$3,016,908)	<u>Number of Donations</u> (2,298)	<u>Total Donated to Party Committees</u> (\$7,750,597)	<u>Number of Donations</u> (325)	<u>Total Facilities</u> (43 and 4 headquarters) *including both detention and correction*
Washington	\$2,150	6	\$0	0	1
Florida	\$648,299	686	\$6,948,647	200	4 (and 1 headquarters)
Texas	\$348,960	254	\$60,000	5	11 (and 1 headquarters)
Georgia	\$337,233	215	\$92,000	8	3
New Mexico	\$292,650	258	\$27,000	7	2
Oklahoma	\$288,500	127	\$7,500	2	2
California	\$216,900	49	\$405,000	27	6 (and 1 headquarters)
Virginia	\$207,107	56	\$0	0	1
Arizona	\$192,440	175	\$0	0	3
Indiana	\$103,430	62	\$37,900	21	2
Louisiana	\$80,250	96	\$124,550	31	4
Alabama	\$73,000	37	\$0	0	0
New Jersey	\$38,750	42	\$0	0	0

Mississippi	\$31,800	39	\$1,000	1	0
Idaho	\$28,650	52	\$1,500	2	0
Illinois	\$28,100	49	\$2,500	5	0
Pennsylvania	\$24,450	35	\$8,000	6	1
New Hampshire	\$18,000	5	\$0	0	0
North Carolina	\$10,200	3	\$0	0	1 (and 1 headquarters)
Nevada	\$10,000	1	\$10,000	2	0
South Carolina	\$8,500	4	\$0	0	0
Kansas	\$6,250	23	\$3,000	3	0
New York	\$4,250	3	\$6,000	2	0
Colorado	\$4,150	6	\$1,000	1	1
Maryland	\$3,500	4	\$0	0	0
Wisconsin	\$3,500	2	\$15,000	2	0
Hawai'i	\$2,000	4	\$0	0	0
Vermont	\$2,000	1	\$0	0	0
Kentucky	\$1,000	1	\$0	0	0
Michigan	\$890	3	\$0	0	1

(FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.4,3; FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.4; FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.4;

FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.3; FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.3; The GEO Group, Inc, n.d.2)

All of CoreCivic, Inc's donations to selected offices within states

<u>State</u> (33- 31 states for selected offices and 23 states for party committees)	<u>Total Donated to Candidates</u> (\$2,785,524)	<u>Number of Donations</u> (2,906)	<u>Total Donated to Party Committees</u> (\$1,678,328)	<u>Number of Donations</u> (355)	<u>Total Facilities</u> (93) *including both detention and correction*
Washington	\$8,700	20	\$18,800	25	0
California	\$1,029,681	630	\$568,535	69	5
Georgia	\$554,050	582	\$122,500	31	4
Tennessee	\$491,400	513	\$195,500	43	5
Idaho	\$153,500	419	\$10,500	11	0
New Mexico	\$141,200	261	\$5,500	6	6
Florida	\$70,250	115	\$552,494	58	2
Louisiana	\$46,000	66	\$19,000	6	0
Texas	\$37,750	25	\$7,500	2	14
Oklahoma	\$36,700	34	\$8,000	5	10
Indiana	\$34,200	18	\$5,750	10	0
Nevada	\$29,500	15	\$5,000	1	1
Mississippi	\$26,050	50	\$0	0	1
Kansas	\$23,500	25	\$0	0	2
Kentucky	\$15,600	20	\$26,500	13	3
Colorado	\$14,950	23	\$39,500	21	34
Virginia	\$14,243	21	\$2,000	2	2
New Hampshire	\$12,750	4	\$0	0	0
Vermont	\$12,250	31	\$15,900	27	0
Hawai'i	\$6,000	1	\$6,000	1	0

Utah	\$4,500	5	\$8,500	9	0
Montana	\$4,450	7	\$10,500	6	1
Ohio	\$4,000	4	\$0	0	2
South Carolina	\$3,500	1	\$0	0	0
Alabama	\$3,000	2	\$0	0	0
Arkansas	\$2,000	1	\$0	0	0
Iowa	\$1,750	7	\$0	0	0
Missouri	\$1,050	3	\$1,000	1	0
Maryland	\$1,000	1	\$4,000	1	0
New Jersey	\$1,000	1	\$0	0	1
North Dakota	\$1,000	1	\$0	0	0
Nebraska	\$0	0	\$5,000	1	0
Wisconsin	\$0	0	\$34,000	4	0

(FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.2,1; FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.2; FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.2;

FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.1; FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.1; CoreCivic, Inc, n.d.)

In this data, comparative dynamics across GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc shows complicated donation patterns. In fact, more facilities in a state does not equate to greater expenditures. And while it is accurate that GEO Group, Inc spends the most in Florida, its headquarters state, CoreCivic, Inc rather spends the most in California when it has the most facilities in Colorado and its headquarter is in Tennessee. Greater expenditures due to more facilities in states is also not significant enough to explain CoreCivic, Inc's motives behind their donations and lobbying activities when they do not have any facilities in Washington state, as well as GEO Group, Inc's minimal political contribution in Washington considering the existence of the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, and the ongoing nature of contentious efforts,

including in the state legislature HB 1090 to shut down that facility. Aside from how GEO Group, Inc only made six donations of \$2,150 to Washington state politicians yet did not donate to any Washington state party committees, GEO Group, Inc made 56 donations of \$207,107 to Virginia state politicians and none to Virginia state party committees (FollowTheMoney, n.d.4,3). But Virginia received more than Arizona that has three GEO Group, Inc facilities while Georgia that also has three GEO Group, Inc facilities received more than Virginia and Arizona (FollowTheMoney, n.d.4,3). Michigan, the state with the least donations to politicians and none to party committees, also has one GEO Group, Inc facility (FollowTheMoney, n.d.4,3; The GEO Group, Inc, n.d.2). This grappling disproportionality extends through all of the states GEO Group, Inc chose to donate to. In the 25 of 30 states where GEO Group, Inc donated more to than Washington state, 12 states do not have any GEO Group, Inc facility and four states only have one GEO Group, Inc facility. Alabama, with no facility, received \$70,000 more than Washington, and New Jersey with no facility received \$36,000 dollars more (FollowTheMoney, n.d.4,3; The GEO Group, Inc, n.d.2).

CoreCivic, Inc's total donations to states also uphold such disproportionate dynamics, although in different variations compared to GEO Group, Inc. As CoreCivic, Inc made 20 donations of \$8,700 to Washington state politicians and 25 donations of \$18,800 to Washington state party committees, neighboring state Idaho politicians received 399 more donations of \$144,800 more and Idaho party committees received 14 donations of \$8,300 less than Washington state (FollowTheMoney, n.d.2,1). But while Louisiana politicians received 46 more donations of \$37,000 more and Louisiana party committees received only \$200 more through 19 donations less, Indiana state politicians received 2 less donations of \$25,300 while Indiana state party committees received 15 less donations of \$13,050 less all compared to Washington state as

states with just one facility (FollowTheMoney, n.d.2,1; CoreCivic, Inc, n.d.). Some states with no facility presence have garnered more total donations than Washington state, such as CoreCivic, Inc's \$14,950 to 23 Colorado state politicians when CoreCivic, Inc owns 34 facilities there, while \$14,243 to 21 Virginia state politicians when it owns only one facility there (FollowTheMoney, n.d.2,1). Another difference in CoreCivic, Inc's donation patterns is how they donated to Nebraska party committees and Wisconsin party committees but did not donate to either states' politicians, where both states have no CoreCivic, Inc facilities (FollowTheMoney, n.d.2,1; CoreCivic, Inc, n.d.). In the 18 out of 31 states where CoreCivic, Inc donated more to the politicians than Washington state's politicians, five do not have a CoreCivic, Inc facility while two only have one (FollowTheMoney, n.d.2,1; CoreCivic, Inc, n.d.). And in the nine out of 23 states where CoreCivic, Inc donated more to the party committees than Washington state's party committees, only two do not have a CoreCivic, Inc facility while six has around two to five CoreCivic, Inc with Colorado as an exception of 34 CoreCivic, Inc facilities (FollowTheMoney, n.d.2,1; CoreCivic, Inc, n.d.).

These results are extremely puzzling and there are a plethora of assumptions why. It is important to conduct further research into why and how GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc chooses which states to donate to, especially when 15 of the 30 states they donate to do not have a GEO Group, Inc facility and 17 of 33 do not not have a CoreCivic, Inc facility (The GEO Group, Inc, n.d.2; CoreCivic, Inc, n.d.). What makes GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc donate to certain states more than other states with the same amount or less facilities? Of course, it is important to remember that the donations listed in Washington State's Public Disclosure Commission and OpenSecrets may not consist of all the donations GEO Group, Inc's and CoreCivic, Inc's have made. The companies may have engaged in dark money donations,

entirely concealed from the public. At least for what is publicly known, GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc and “their associates have funneled more than \$10 million to candidates since 1989 [and counting] and have spent nearly \$25 million on lobbying efforts” (Cohen, 2015).

Regardless of what kind of money GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc fuels into politics and law, there are implications of influence. Headquartered in Florida, it is not a mere coincidence that GEO Group, Inc received a \$110 million government contract with the state prisons when then Representative Rubio, whose campaign received more GEO funds than any other, hired a real estate trustee from GEO Group, Inc (Cohen, 2015). This may insinuate why GEO Group, Inc invested \$648,299 into Florida state politicians and almost \$7 million into Florida’s party committees so far (FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.4,3). In Arizona, just one of the few states CoreCivic, Inc donated most to on OpenSecrets’ first 500 results, Senator Russell Pearce’s Senate Bill 1070 that expanded the for-profit imprisonment of migrants was a collaborative product of CoreCivic, Inc and other large corporations involved in the American Legislative Exchange Council (Sullivan, 2012).

Reconnecting back to the findings on the active fundings contracts GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc have with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice, there is a parallel between where they get governmentally funded and where they donate. As GEO Group, Inc’s active contracts with DHS and DOJ are geographically given to facilities in California, Florida (Miami), Texas (Conroe, Laredo, and Houston), and Georgia (Lovejoy) (USASpending, n.d.), GEO Group, Inc donates the most to Florida, Texas, Georgia, and California being sixth most donated (FollowTheMoney, n.d.4,3). CoreCivic, Inc’s active contracts with DHS and DOJ are also geographically given to facilities in Texas (Taylor and Houston), California (San Diego), and Nevada (Las Vegas), which correlates to CoreCivic, Inc

donating the most to California (\$1 million). However, donation amounts to Texas and Nevada politicians fall to eighth (\$37,750) and 11th (\$29,500) (FollowTheMoney.org, n.d.2).

DATA FINDINGS PART THREE: DISCUSSION

Linnéa Sturmhoefel Warnberg brings forth another important consideration of GEO Group, Inc's and CoreCivic, Inc's elite power status: their rampant spread of soft power tactics to promote the prison-industrial complex, including the private detention and more newly-developed alternatives to detention industries (2021). Although Sturmhoefel Warnberg's research does not mainly focus on political and legal influence, the breakdown of both companies' power exertion offers insight. Political and legal influence could be considered either real, structural, or soft powers- beyond the power dominance of donations. GEO Group, Inc's and CoreCivic, Inc's political network is deep and vast: various board members of both corporations have had multiple longstanding senior-level federal and state government positions. "The companies have made political and financial contributions to political parties and politicians, which [affects] the politician's opportunity to market themselves, hence, their chance to execute soft power and get their opinions heard" (Sturmhoefel Warnberg, 2021, p. 47). This ultimately alludes to C. Wright Mills' theory of the power elite, a group composed of political elites, economic/financial elites, and military elites that come together to control major hierarchical institutions that uphold and maintain elite power as they share the same backgrounds, mindsets, interests, and agendas (Mills, 1956). Despite how this theory dates back 67 years, GEO Group, Inc's and CoreCivic, Inc's entrenched political actions, according to Sturmhoefel Warnberg, exemplify Mills' observations. Potentially, GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc feel as if their nationwide institutional power is strong enough to sustain without

additional financial contribution in Washington state with just the Northwest Detention Center as one singular GEO Group, Inc facility.

Compounding Cohen, Sullivan, and Sturmhoefel Warnberg with Mills back to their own research findings, GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc exert a definite political influence, even though the numbers in Washington state suggest a lesser influence here than their massive contributions to other states. Future research could delve deeper into the possible reasons as to why and how GEO Group, Inc's and CoreCivic, Inc's political influence in Washington state is the way it is through a comparative approach quantitatively and qualitatively analyzing between Washington state and other states. Beyond my research's aims, future research also should directly respond to the movement needs of grassroots efforts against immigration oppression, as areas of information about GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc are still very muddled.

CONCLUSION

Through this research, I found that GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc are the top corporations profiting from immigrant detention in the contemporary USA, and that the major ATD compares are subsidiaries of major detention corporations. GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc receiving massive funding contracts from the Department of Homeland Security and even the Department of Justice reinforces that they are major players at least within governmental recognition and collaboration. GEO Group, Inc has had 142 contracts with DHS so far, and despite only nine active, they are actively receiving \$150 million from an overall total of \$177 million (USASpending, n.d.2). Furthermore, the lowest active DOJ contract surpasses \$200 million, totalling all the active DOJ contracts surpassing \$1.3 billion (USASpending, n.d.2). CoreCivic, Inc has had 87 contracts with DHS so far and the three active amounts to \$27 million

(USASpending, n.d.1). Three active contracts with the DOJ of six amount to \$623 million (USASpending, n.d.1). Although there are many miscellaneous companies manufacturing and selling ankle bracelets, GEO Group, Inc's subsidiary BI Incorporated is the major player over ankle bracelets in the ATD industry.

Focusing on GEO Group, Inc's and CoreCivic, Inc's financial contributions and lobbying activities in Washington, I discovered that their efforts were relatively modest, particularly when compared to other states. GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc have donated to Washington state politicians, although not as much compared to other states. Most alarmingly, GEO Group, Inc has donated almost \$7 million to Florida state party committees. I explored potential reasons for this striking disparity, such as the presence of active private prison contracts in each state, but ultimately my interpretations do not encompass the full reasoning for GEO's and CoreCivic's relatively modest donations in Washington, especially since the GEO facility in Tacoma is one of the largest immigration detention centers on the West coast. Ultimately, I found that the only potential explanation was that advanced by Linnéa Sturmhoefel Warnberg, who suggests that major companies may be confident they are able to achieve their political objectives in Washington state due to power and influence they have already built through national networks of influence. However, this is still a speculation and requires confirmations through further research. In sum, future research must be conducted to confirm the reasons why GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc donate lesser amounts to Washington than other states. I further suggest that future researchers should be alert for other possible ways in which GEO Group, Inc and CoreCivic, Inc maintain and increase their power through political, legal, and other systems not discussed in this thesis.

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