

1 **Resolution Calling on the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ to**
2 **Divest from Private Prisons and to recommend adoption of this Resolution Calling for**
3 **Divestment From Private Prisons by the Thirty-First General Synod.**

4 **The name of the submitting bodies are the Central Pacific Conference Justice and Witness**
5 **Ministry Team and First Congregational United Church of Christ in Portland, Oregon.**

6 WHEREAS in 2003 the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ committed
7 itself to be an Anti-Racist Church;¹ and

8 WHEREAS past General Synods have called upon the church to engage in prophetic speech and
9 action directed at eliminating systemic racism in all its guises (GS 30 [2015]²), by acting to
10 disrupt and dismantle the growing prison industrial complex in the United States (GS 30 [2015]³)
11 and oppose the rapid construction of new prisons (GS 11 [1977]⁴, GS 27 [1997]⁵); and

12 WHEREAS, the number of people in our jails and prisons has expanded to 2.3 million in 2015,
13 nearly half of which are people convicted of non-violent crimes, and immense racial disparities
14 are a hallmark of our criminal justice system;⁶ and

15 WHEREAS, Privately-operated federal facilities have grown 600 percent faster than state-level
16 contract facilities since 2010, and now represent the single most quickly-growing corrections
17 sector;⁷ and

18 WHEREAS, the Detention Bed Quota requires Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to
19 detain at least 34,000 people in immigration detention at any given time and immigration
20 detention is the fastest-growing component of the U.S. system of mass incarceration, costing
21 taxpayers \$2.2 billion per year;⁸ and

¹ <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/gs24minutes.pdf>

² <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/GS30-DISMANTLING-THE-NEW-JIM-CROW.pdf>

³ [http://uccfiles.com/pdf/GS30-DISMANTLING-DISCRIMINATORY-SYSTEMS-OF-MASS-
INCARCERATION.pdf](http://uccfiles.com/pdf/GS30-DISMANTLING-DISCRIMINATORY-SYSTEMS-OF-MASS-
INCARCERATION.pdf)

⁴ [http://www.uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/MORATORIUM-ON-THE-CONSTRUCTION-OF-NEW-
PRISONS-AND-JAILS-GS11.pdf](http://www.uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/MORATORIUM-ON-THE-CONSTRUCTION-OF-NEW-
PRISONS-AND-JAILS-GS11.pdf)

⁵ <http://uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/PRISON-INDUSTRIAL-COMPLEX.pdf>

⁶ *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2016*, The Prison Policy Initiative, 3/14/2016.
<http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2016.html>

⁷ https://www.aclu.org/files/assets/private_prison_infor_act_sign_on_letter_final_jan2013.pdf

⁸ Controversial quota drives immigration detention boom, Washington Post, 10/13/13,
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/controversial-quota-drives-immigration-detention-
boom/2013/10/13/09bb689e-214c-11e3-ad1a-1a919f2ed890_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/controversial-quota-drives-immigration-detention-
boom/2013/10/13/09bb689e-214c-11e3-ad1a-1a919f2ed890_story.html); National Immigrant Justice
Center, Eliminate the Detention Bed Quota, [http://www.immigrantjustice.org/eliminate-detention-bed-
quota#.VdnyWUaJeRk](http://www.immigrantjustice.org/eliminate-detention-bed-
quota#.VdnyWUaJeRk); Banking on Detention, Detention Watch Network and Center for Constitutional
Rights, http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/sites/default/files/Banking_on_Detention_DWN.pdf

22 WHEREAS, there is a growing national concern that quota-driven detention capacity must not
23 determine immigration enforcement and deportation policy, including H.R.2808 - Protecting
24 Taxpayers and Communities from Local Detention Quotas Act, introduced on 06/17/2015;⁹ and

25 WHEREAS, private prison corporations Corrections Corporation of America and GEO Group
26 lobbied extensively for the Detention Bed Quota,¹⁰ against humane immigration reform in 2012
27 and 2013,¹¹ for harsh sentencing and mandatory minimums in the criminal justice system¹² and
28 have spent approximately \$45 million in the last decade to influence state and federal
29 policymakers;¹³ and

30 WHEREAS, the Federal Bureau of Prisons plans to phase out their contracts with private prison
31 facilities over the next 5 years,¹⁴ representing approximately 10% of revenue for both GEO
32 Group and CCA, but Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the US Marshall Service, as
33 well as a vast patchwork of state, and local governments continue to contract with private prison
34 corporations; and

35 WHEREAS, private prison corporations now operate two thirds of ICE detention centers, and
36 CCA and GEO alone operate nine out of ten of the largest detention centers.¹⁵

37 WHEREAS, private prisons are supported by their “million shares club” investors, those entities
38 which own over 1 million shares in CCA and GEO Group, through investments, extensions of
39 credit, and sharing lobbyists to promote a shared agenda;¹⁶ and

40 WHEREAS, Wells Fargo is a major lender to and investor in private prisons, as of the second
41 quarter of 2015 owning nearly 1.5 million shares in CCA and GEO Group;¹⁷ and

42 WHEREAS, CCA and GEO Group took advantage of a legal loophole to receive Real Estate
43 Investment Trust (REIT) tax status in 2013, and in 2015, avoided paying \$113 million in federal
44 taxes due to their REIT status;¹⁸ and

⁹ H.R.2808 - Protecting Taxpayers and Communities from Local Detention Quotas Act,
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/2808>

¹⁰ Payoff: How Congress Ensures Private Prison Profit with an Immigrant Detention Quota, Grassroots
Leadership, April 2015, <http://grassrootsleadership.org/reports/payoff-how-congress-ensures-private-prison-profit-immigrant-detention-quota#1>

¹¹ <http://www.alternet.org/immigration/how-profit-corporate-prison-lobby-killed-immigration-reform>

¹² Presumed guilty: How prisons profit off the ‘war on drugs,’ MSNBC, 8/14/13,
<http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/presumed-guilty-how-prisons-profit-the>

¹³ What Does Millions in Lobbying Money Buy? Five Congresspeople in the Pocket of the Private Prison
Industry, The Nation, 2/27/13, <http://www.thenation.com/article/what-does-millions-lobbying-money-buy-five-congresspeople-pocket-private-prison-indus/>

¹⁴ Memorandum released August 18th, 2016 by Deputy Attorney General Sally Q. Yates
<https://www.justice.gov/opa/blog/phasing-out-our-use-private-prisons>

¹⁵ Payoff: How Congress Ensures Private Prison Profit with an Immigrant Detention Quota, Grassroots
Leadership, April 2015 <http://grassrootsleadership.org/reports/payoff-how-congress-ensures-private-prison-profit-immigrant-detention-quota#1>

¹⁶ Financial Investment Companies that own Private Prison companies, CCA and GEO,
<http://www.enlaceintl.org/#!million-shares-club/cveb>

¹⁷ Securities and Exchange Commission 13-F filings for reporting period 6/30/2015.

45 WHEREAS, Congress has the power to revoke Private Prisons' REIT Status; and

46 WHEREAS the United Church of Christ is recognized as a founding member of the Interfaith
47 Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) and maintains a leading presence through The
48 Pension Boards–United Church of Christ, Inc. (PBUCC), an Affiliated Ministry of the United
49 Church of Christ, and United Church Funds (UCF), an Associated Ministry of the United Church
50 of Christ;¹⁹

51 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of
52 Christ encourages its church members, congregations, and conference Finance Management
53 Working Group to prohibit any and all persons acting on their behalf from entering into any
54 financial relationships with private prison companies and their million shares club investors, and
55 to divest of any existing holdings in the Corrections Corporation of America and the GEO
56 Group, as well as those institutions owning over 1 million shares in these companies; and

57 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on adoption of this resolution the Conference Minister
58 is to forward it, along with a letter explaining who the Central Pacific Conference is and the
59 adoption process, to all elected state and local legislators, and issue a press release to all media in
60 the Conference area with the same explanation and text of the resolution; and

61 THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Central Pacific Conference of the
62 United Church of Christ endorses this RESOLUTION CALLING FOR DIVESTMENT FROM
63 PRIVATE PRISONS and recommends the adoption of the following resolution by the Thirty-
64 First General Synod:

65 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirty-First General Synod:

66 CALLS upon the churches and church members to prohibit any and all persons acting on their
67 behalf from entering into any financial relationships with private prison companies and their
68 million shares club investors; and

69 CALLS upon members of the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation and the Senate
70 Finance Committee to revoke private prison corporations' Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT)
71 status; and

72 CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board, the Pension Boards – United Church of Christ,
73 Inc., United Church Funds, conferences, local churches, members, and other related United
74 Church of Christ entities to divest all of its holdings in the Corrections Corporation of America
75 and the GEO Group, as well as those institutions owning over 1 million shares in these
76 companies; and

77 CALLS upon the United Church of Christ member organizations to lead the Interfaith Center on
78 Corporate Responsibility in establishing a portfolio screen to prevent any future investments in
79 the private prison industry, including GEO Group and Corrections Corporation of America and
80 their major investors, and that a letter be sent to Wells Fargo, requesting their immediate

¹⁸ Securities and Exchange Commission 10-K filings for reporting on fiscal year ending 12/31/2015

¹⁹ “Minutes of the Thirtieth General Synod,” <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/GS30-Minutes-Final.pdf>, 24.

81 divestment from private prison corporations GEO Group and Corrections Corporation of
82 America; and, if this request is not satisfied within six months, that existing Wells Fargo
83 holdings be redirected as soon as is feasible; and

84 CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board to monitor the implementation of this resolution
85 by all United Church of Christ national entities and to urge that those who manage the United
86 Church of Christ Board's own invested funds and who provide United Church of Christ Board
87 employee health and pension benefits be in compliance with this resolution; and

88 ASKS the General Minister and President to provide an annual report to the whole church on the
89 implementation of this resolution.

90 FINANCIAL IMPACT: Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in
91 accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.