



3 things you should know about immigration detention quotas

1. Each year approximately **400,000 immigrants are funneled into the U.S. immigration detention system.** Detention quotas are a key driver of this grim reality.

These aren't just numbers. Rather, they are individual people whose lives are severely interrupted by detention. They include husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, children, legal residents, the elderly, asylum seekers, workers and employers, and people suffering from mental and physical illnesses.

2. **Private prison company shareholders and executive leadership profit most from arbitrary and senseless detention quotas.** They get paid based on quotas in their contracts, regardless of how many people are actually held in in their facility at any given time. That's why they stand behind quotas and actively encourage policymakers to support them, too.

For example, CCA (a private prison company operating detention centers) stated, "(o)ur growth is generally dependent upon our ability to obtain new contracts to develop and manage new correctional and detention facilities." Much of the approximately \$2.8 billion the U.S. government spends each year on detention ensures private profit without addressing community needs.

3. **Eliminating detention quotas is a critical step** to achieving a full abolition of immigrant detention.

Mass immigration detention pulls families and loved ones apart, violates basic human rights and dignity, unravels the delicate fabric of our communities, and is far too costly (in both human and financial terms) to continue.



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About immigration detention quotas

Did you know that that federal policy requires U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to maintain a certain number of spaces in immigration detention centers every single day? You may have heard of these spaces referred to as “detention quotas” or “bed quotas.”

These arbitrary mandates drive detentions that separate families, undermine the right to freedom, and, in some locations, subject people to deplorable confinement conditions that violate human rights standards.

Sixty-two percent of immigration detention centers are owned and/or operated by for-profit prison corporations. Not surprisingly, locking up immigrants has become big business for companies like Corrections Corp. of America (CCA), which received \$208 million in U.S. government contracts to detain immigrants in 2012. CCA and other companies have spent millions of dollars lobbying to protect their profits—even when the result is poor public policy.

Detention quotas are inhumane and erode the dignity of immigrants. And they must end.

There are two types of detention quotas. The first is established by Congress (what we’ll call the “federal detention quota”) and the other is created by contract between ICE and for-profit companies providing detention services (we’ll refer to these as a “site-specific quotas”).

Federal detention quota

The federal detention quota first appeared in the FY2010 federal budget for ICE, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)’s domestic immigration enforcement agency. Since that time, a quota has been in every presidential proposed budget to Congress and DHS Appropriations Act.

Currently the federal detention quota requires that ICE make available 34,000 immigration detention beds every day.

Site-specific quotas

Site-specific quotas are distinct from the federal detention quota in two ways:

1. These quotas are specific to a particular detention facility operated by private prison corporations through a contract with the U.S. government’s ICE agency.
2. These quotas are secured in contracts between the private prison corporation and ICE (not through the federal budget process in Congress, unlike the federal quota).

Site-specific quotas, or “guaranteed minimums” as they’re called in contracts between ICE and corporations, require that ICE pay for a certain number of detention slots at the facility, regardless of the number of immigrants actually held.

For more information, visit afsc.org/stopquotas or write to endthequota@afsc.org.