



August 31, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary  
The Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

The Project On Government Oversight (POGO) is an independent nonprofit that investigates and exposes corruption and other misconduct in order to achieve a more effective, accountable, open, and ethical federal government. In our efforts to further this mission, we want to bring your attention to ongoing requests for information (RFI) and requests for proposals (RFPs) for private detention centers while the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) examines whether it should continue using privatized immigration detention centers.

We ask that you put an immediate halt to any RFIs, RFPs, solicitations, and long-term contract renewals for detention centers while the Homeland Security Advisory Board evaluates whether the immigration detention operations conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) should change.

POGO is encouraged by your swift action to examine DHS's reliance on private detention centers in light of the Department of Justice's (DOJ) decision to stop using private prisons.<sup>1</sup> DOJ stated that private prisons "simply do not provide the same level of correctional services, programs, and resources; they do not save substantially on costs; and as noted in a recent report by the Department's Office of Inspector General, they do not maintain the same level of safety and security" when compared to prisons run by DOJ's Bureau of Prisons.<sup>2</sup>

Awarding new contracts or exercising long-term options on existing contracts could lock DHS into deals that are neither good for federal taxpayers nor advance good public policy. Yet, POGO is aware of RFIs for a family detention center and an adult detention center that were recently made public.<sup>3</sup> In fact, POGO recently learned that an RFP for the family center followed the RFI, but was not published publicly and bidding was limited to a small group of vendors. DHS should freeze all existing procurement plans, solicitations, and contracts for private detention services,

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<sup>1</sup> Sally Q. Yates, Deputy Attorney General, Memorandum for the Acting Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, *Reducing our Use of Private Prisons*, August 18, 2016. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/file/886311/download> (Downloaded August 31, 2016) (Hereinafter *Yates Memo*)

<sup>2</sup> *Yates Memo*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Federal Business Opportunities, RFI- Family Residential Services Solicitation, March 10, 2016. [https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=bceccce737761292df990679182cd882&tab=core&\\_cview=0](https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=bceccce737761292df990679182cd882&tab=core&_cview=0) (Downloaded August 30, 2016); Federal Business Opportunities, RFI- Detention Services, April 15, 2016. [https://www.fbo.gov/?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=d2ad54b2b886181304371163cd9424b7&tab=core&\\_cview=0](https://www.fbo.gov/?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=d2ad54b2b886181304371163cd9424b7&tab=core&_cview=0) (Downloaded August 30, 2016)



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pending the review by the Advisory Board. Any contract options that might be exercised should be for the shortest time permissible under the contract.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or Elizabeth Hempowicz at [ehempowicz@pogo.org](mailto:ehempowicz@pogo.org) or (202) 347-1122.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Brian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Danielle Brian  
Executive Director