

Interfaith Bank Boycott Campaign

Background Information:

Press release and social media guidance will be provided.

How does the leveraging work?

Puts pressure on banks which will be more likely to pressure policymakers to improve treatment of immigrants. Below are some more specific examples of how the leveraging may function.

- banks may write a letter or make a public statement,
- banks may stop lobbying in ways that would enhance the conditions for detention of immigrants,
- policymakers get money from these banks so may be pressured to change policy to maintain such contributions,
 - ex. Wells Fargo, Bank of America, and JP Morgan Chase are the top banks funding political candidates, \$3-4 mill. each;
 - Trump companies owe Wells Fargo \$14.4 million and the bank services another \$1.2 billion in Trump company's loans. Candidate Trump received over \$400,000 in direct contributions from these banks. Paul Ryan has received over \$335,000.
- banks pressure private prisons to lobby less,
- policymakers may have investments in these banks so they want them to profit,
- policymakers don't want the system of capital to be obstructed,
- policymakers have constituents who join the boycott,
- other unknown reasons, such as key relationships.

Puts pressure on banks which will be less likely to invest in private prisons, which makes it harder for private prisons to grow and detain immigrants. Also, banks may make different decisions about who they lend to regarding other companies profiting from immigration system, ex. surveillance, wall, etc.

Private prisons, like GEO recently, hire Dept. of Justice/DHS people and write legislation, like in Texas recently. So, DOJ/DHS decision-makers care about the impact on private prisons, which could be a lucrative future employer. If funding is being cut to private prisons, they will feel pressure to improve treatment of immigrants and/or find other ways to make money besides detaining immigrants. In the long-term, private prisons will be less likely to try and influence legislation in order to avoid additional boycotts.

Profit Process of Banks and Private Prisons¹

- Six banks play large roles in financing CCA's and GEO Group's debts—Wells Fargo, Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, BNP Paribas, SunTrust, and U.S. Bancorp.

¹ <https://www.inthepublicinterest.org/report-the-banks-that-finance-private-prison-companies/>; Wells Fargo Fact Sheet: https://www.inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/ITPI_WellsFargoPrivatePrisons_FactSheet_Dec2016.pdf; Bank of America Fact Sheet: https://www.inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/ITPI_BoAPrivatePrisons_FactSheet_Jan2017.pdf

- At the end of June 2016, CCA had total debts of \$1.5 billion and GEO Group had total debts of \$1.9 billion.
- CCA and GEO Group have relied on debt financing from banks to expand their control of the criminal justice and immigration enforcement systems by acquiring smaller companies that provide “community corrections” services, like residential reentry and electronic monitoring.
- Banks profit from collecting fees and interest on credit, bonds, and loans, as well as from owning or investing their clients’ money in shares of CCA and GEO Group.
- Financing enables both CCA and GEO Group to operate as real estate investment trusts (REITs), which reduces their income taxes.

Effectiveness of campaigns: we need to see multiple dimensions

- Policy and Structural:* see above
- Cultural:* If a broad interfaith coalition would get behind this, it would affect the culture by helping to normalize the tactic of boycott and more broadly the set of tactics often within what Gandhi called “non-cooperation” or others call “nonviolent resistance.”
- Social:* This campaign would help us develop and strengthen relationships with other key groups already engaged in such activity and perhaps others who might join in. This is healthy in itself and a key resource for movement building. For example, there are immigration, environmental, and criminal justice groups supporting such a boycott.
- Personal:* This campaign would help persons take more seriously their choices about who they bank with, not only on this issue, but hopefully more broadly. This campaign can also enable particular persons to develop in more courageous action but also for some as leaders for the broader movement.
- Spiritual:* This campaign can enable a deeper understanding and praxis of how our faith calls us to work for justice, to take risks, to integrate our whole life, and deepen our sense of religious teachings on active nonviolence.

Additional Educational Resources:

1. City Divestment Toolkit: Wells Fargo and Bank of America²
2. Backers of Hate Campaign: Wells Fargo³

Other Implementation Initiatives:

1. Stay in direct communication with ICCR to coordinate actions
2. Share material broadly but focus mobilizing on key locations, such as communities with private prisons.
2. Continue outreach to like-minded organizations for input and support

² <http://www.enlaceintl.org/resources>

³ <http://www.backersofhate.org/en/wellsfargo.html>