



June 23, 2017

VIA Electronic Mail

Frank Estrada
Director of Operations, NW Detention Center, Tacoma
The GEO Group, INC.

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JEAN ROBINSON
BOARD PRESIDENT

KATHLEEN TAYLOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bryan Wilcox
Acting Field Office Director, Enforcement and Removal Operations
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Re: Hunger Strike

Dear Mr. Estrada and Mr. Wilcox:

We, the undersigned organizations, representing a broad range of civil rights, mental health, legal, and social justice interests, express our support for those on hunger strike. A hunger strike is a First Amendment protected form of protest. The people who are striking are doing so at great personal risk and we acknowledge their strength and commitment to seeking positive change in the Northwest Detention Center. We are writing to urge you and your staff to hold a meeting with the hunger strikers and their representatives to discuss the concerns outlined below.

We are in regular contact with people detained at the Northwest Detention Center and are concerned by the conditions they face. We have heard complaints of poor food quality, exorbitant commissary prices, wages of \$1 per day or less, and inadequate mental and physical health care. Although detainees went on strike earlier this year, they report that conditions have either stayed the same or worsened. That fact came into sharp focus when a detainee recently attempted suicide. Indeed, witnesses are experiencing ongoing trauma as a result of this incident and continue to seek counseling. This neglect results in harm and trauma for all detainees. Accordingly, we are investigating a number of issues related to the health and safety of those housed in your facility.

These important issues require your corrective action. As advocates, we seek the implementation of policies that will ensure safety and health, and protect the civil rights of all detainees. Retaliatory actions in response to the exercise of free speech such as transfers, force feeding and solitary confinement, are unconstitutional. Given the immediate needs of those on hunger strike, we urge you to hold an open and transparent meeting with the hunger strikers and their representatives as soon as possible so that their important concerns are addressed. We will follow up with you soon to see that a meeting is scheduled.

Respectfully,

ACLU of Washington
Alejandra Gonza, University of Washington, International Human Rights
Clinic (organization listed for identification purposes only)
Columbia Legal Services
Disability Rights Washington
Legal Voice
Northwest Detention Center Resistance
Racial Justice Coalition
Whatcom Civil Rights Project