

An ICE facility in Marana?



Dear constituents and friends,

The businesses we have in our community reflect who we are. That is why I'm concerned about the possible reopening of the Marana prison as an ICE detention center for immigrants. The Management and Training Corporation (MTC) ran the prison before and has bought it back for \$15 million.

ICE detention centers are now a lucrative business. Congress appropriated \$45 billion (that is with a "b") for building and maintaining these facilities. For example, Geo Group, another private company, expects to earn more than [\\$240 million a year from](#) four ICE facilities.

Profitable, yes. Ethical and humane, not at all. There is increasing concern and documentation about the horrific conditions for detainees, but particularly for children. Reported conditions include kids sleeping on the ground with lights on at all hours, no access to basic sanitation including toilets and handwashing, and no adequate access to medical care, often with dire consequences.

The people being detained are not "alien enemies," gang members, or criminals. They are our neighbors, co-workers, and friends -- people who hold jobs, pay taxes, and raise their children who then become active members of our community and proud Americans.

The sad irony is that our federal government is spending billions on terrorizing and detaining our neighbors while defunding basic programs that we desperately need.

Our office is currently working with Ms. Ellie Towne, an 88-year-old powerhouse who is working on raising \$45,000 to reinstate the senior lunch program in Flowing Wells three days a week. She wishes it could be five days. There are more than 75 seniors in the area who need this program, some stating it is the only solid meal a day they can count on. This is to replace a program formerly funded by federal grants.

It's often said that budgets are moral documents that reflect our true values. What does it say when critical programs like senior meals, Medicaid, WIC, utility assistance, and housing programs are gutted while the federal government is investing billions in facilities to lock up our neighbors?

If you'd like to learn more, please attend the Town Hall in Marana on Thursday, October 23. We will have experts from the ACLU of Arizona, the Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project, and Just Communities AZ. It is from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Coyote Trails Elementary School in Marana (8000 N. Silverbell Rd.). I hope you can join.



Jennifer Allen