



PRESS RELEASE
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U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Issues Statement of Concern on Alleged Abusive Labor Practices at Immigration Detention Centers

Washington, DC – The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, by majority vote, issued a [statement](#) calling on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Congress to investigate alleged abusive labor practices at government- and privately-operated immigration detention centers. Currently required to pay a mere dollar per day under Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) “Voluntary Work Program,” the centers -- in particular those run privately -- have financial incentives to use detainee labor to cut costs, which allegedly have resulted in abusive practices, including the threat of solitary confinement and restraint. The Program’s meager wage rate, stemming from a law dating to 1950, has never been increased.

In hopes of greater protections for the rights of immigration detainees, the Commission urges Congress and DHS to investigate labor practices at these centers, require payment of a fair wage, and conduct greater oversight.

Over six decades, the Commission has investigated and reported on the often negative civil rights implications of our nation’s immigration laws and policies, including in our 2015 enforcement [report](#). Given the ongoing expansion of the detention center population, vigilance is more urgent than ever.

Chair Catherine E. Lhamon stated: “DHS and Congress must act swiftly to investigate and correct any abuses in both private and government-run detention centers. All detention center providers should be held to the same standard of accountability, whether they are privately- or government-run.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and reporting annually on civil rights. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: Entering our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For more information, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).