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Landmark Ruling: Immigrant Detainees' Class Action Claims For Forced Labor, Unjust Enrichment May Proceed Against The GEO Group, Inc. (NYSE: GEO)

Denver, CO – In an historic ruling, a multi-million dollar federal class action lawsuit filed by nine federal immigrant detainees against private prison contractor The GEO Group, Inc. (NYSE: GEO) received the green light to go forward on Tuesday. The lawsuit, filed by current and former immigrant detainees held in Aurora, Colorado, accuses GEO of violating the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), and demands millions of dollars in damages for forced labor and unjust enrichment. This is the first time in history that a court has held that a for-profit immigrant detention contractor may be held liable for violating the TVPA.

“Today we get a little bit closer to holding accountable those companies that choose to violate the law and pad their profit margins on the backs of immigrant workers,” said lead attorney Brandt Milstein.

The plaintiffs allege that as a matter of policy GEO forces detainees to perform a sweeping array of janitorial and maintenance tasks under threat of solitary confinement in violation of federal forced labor laws. The U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado allowed those claims to proceed. In addition, plaintiffs allege that GEO's utilization of detainee labor to perform functions vital to the maintenance and upkeep of

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the facility results in unjust enrichment of the for-profit detention company. The Court allowed these claims to proceed as well.

“Federal Judicial recognition that the practices of America’s second largest private prison company could constitute forced labor is a tremendous victory for civil immigrant detainees nationwide,” said Nina DiSalvo, Executive Director of Towards Justice, an impact litigation non-profit that serves as co-counsel on this case. “The Judge’s decision allows us to address the systemic problems with GEO’s treatment of immigrant workers through the legal system.”

According plaintiffs’ co-counsel Andrew Turner, “the Court recognized that being an immigrant in detention does not strip you of your basic human right not to be forced to work under threat of solitary confinement. This ruling is an important first step toward ending an unconscionable practice.”

“Using forced detainee labor is an integral tool in maintaining GEO’s profitability under its contracts with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”),” said Nashville-based immigrants’ rights attorney Andrew Free. “GEO’s business model at these ICE facilities is to boost corporate profits by violating the law. The court’s decision today represents an important step forward in ending that morally bankrupt business model.”

“Even the largest corporations in the country must respect the rights and dignity of workers, even for those who are detained. GEO can no longer continue to profit off detained immigrant labor without facing the consequences,” stated co-counsel Hans Meyer, who also represented plaintiffs Alejandro Menocal and Grisel Xahuentitla Flores in their respective immigration cases.

The GEO Group is one of the largest private prison contractors in the world, and much of its revenue stems from U.S. immigration detention contracts like those at issue in this lawsuit. In 2013, The GEO Group, Inc. reported \$1.52 billion in total revenues.

The case is *Alejandro Menocal, et al. v. The Geo Group, Inc.*, No. 1:14-cv-02887-JLK (D. Colo.). The Complaint is here: <http://bit.ly/1eDEQDb>. The Court’s decision denying GEO’s Motion to Dismiss is here: <http://bit.ly/1HecljQ>.

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