



September 9, 2020

ATTN: Elaine P. Wynn, Tony P. Ressler, and Michael Govan,
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles CA 90036

Dear Elaine P. Wynn, Tony P. Ressler, and Michael Govan,

We are executives at two of the nation's leading racial and criminal justice organizations, Color Of Change and Worth Rises. We are writing to you today deeply concerned that Tom Gores, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Platinum Equity, continues to serve on the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) board of trustees. As you know, through Platinum Equity, Tom Gores owns Securus Technologies, the nation's largest prison telecommunications corporations and a major player in the carceral industry. Securus charges incarcerated people and their loved ones predatory rates for phone calls made from prisons, jails, and detention centers across the country.

Color Of Change, along with its over seven million members nationwide, and Worth Rises urge you to immediately remove Tom Gores from your board of trustees due to his active participation in the prison industry and deliberate exploitation of Black, Brown, and economically distressed communities.

Securus makes over \$700 million annually by price-gouging families—that are disproportionately Black and low-income—as they struggle to stay connected to their incarcerated loved ones. The corporation routinely charges as much as \$25 for a simple 15-minute phone call and similarly egregious fees for the myriad of other services it peddles to correctional administrators. In exchange for free reign to exploit the people in their care, Securus pays correctional administrators, including sheriffs, millions each year in site commissions. As a result of Securus's predatory practices, which your board member Tom Gores has endorsed, one in three families goes into debt trying to stay in touch with loved ones behind bars, and 87 percent of those carrying this financial burden are women, predominantly women of color.¹

In addition to preying on the most marginalized communities, Securus has also violated the constitutional rights of incarcerated people and their loved ones time and time again. Securus has been repeatedly sued for illegally recording privileged attorney-client conversations. As recently as June, Securus settled a suit for illegally recording 14,000 privileged attorney-client conversations, a fact that was only revealed because the corporation was hacked and the recordings of over 70 million private phone calls from across at least 37 states were released to the public. Lest you think that such incidents are rare or a thing of the past, just last month, Securus was sued once again for illegally recording attorney-client conversations and sharing them with law enforcement.²

In fact, the list of egregious practices Securus engages in is endless. Just since Tom Gores purchased Securus in 2017, the corporation has been fined for lying to the federal government,³ hacked due to a lack

¹ <http://ellabakercenter.org/sites/default/files/downloads/who-pays.pdf>

² https://www.theregister.com/2020/08/19/securus_lawsuit_attorney_client_calls/

³ <https://www.law360.com/articles/979932/securus-fined-1-7m-for-misleading-fcc-on-merger>

of cybersecurity protocol,⁴ found buying illegal location tracking data to share with police,⁵ and sued for price-fixing with its competitors.⁶

While people across the nation demand racial justice, Tom Gores continues to amass wealth and benefit from a system that exploits Black people and profits from our pain. Put simply, Tom Gores is a prison profiteer and has no place on the board of a prestigious public museum like the LACMA. Furthermore, the donations and social capital the museum gets from Tom Gores are tainted. Any perceived benefits can be traced in part to the exploitation of incarcerated people and their loved ones, who are disproportionately Black and Brown and impacted by racist policing practices.

We are encouraged by recent calls demanding that Black Lives Matter and moved by the clear urgency of this current moment, which the LACMA has also recognized. In June, you released a statement saying that you stand with those rejecting racism and demanding justice. We want to believe your words are true. However, by having Tom Gores on your board of trustees—profiting from the very systems you claim to stand against—your commitment rings hollow. While there is much more work left to be done to build a more equitable world for Black people, you have a distinct opportunity to rebuke systemic racism and racist exploitation by removing Tom Gores from your board. We trust that you will choose to stand with those fighting systemic racism rather than those who profit from the racist and exploitative carceral system.

Color Of Change and Worth Rises will continue to hold LACMA accountable, and we are excited by the possibility of fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with you to build a more just and equitable world for Black and Brown people.

We welcome a conversation to discuss the matter further. Please feel free to email us at [] and [] to schedule a time.

Sincerely,
Scott Roberts
Senior Director of Criminal Justice Campaigns, Color Of Change

Bianca Tylek
Executive Director, Worth Rises

⁴ https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/gykgv9/securus-phone-tracking-company-hacked

⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/28/technology/fcc-cellphones-location-data-fines.html>

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<https://www.classaction.org/news/major-inmate-call-service-providers-hit-with-antitrust-class-action-over-alleged-single-call-price-fixing>