The Private Prison industry relies on the mass detention of immigrants, and cannot survive without laws, contracts, and policies that provide a constant supply of incarcerated individuals. This for-profit model centers profit rather than people. The clearly public purpose of the criminal justice system becomes corrupted by the mandate for private prisons to make money. Private prisons' top priority is to make money because they are corporations. It is not to decrease recidivism or to treat incarcerated people with respect. The way that private prisons increase profit is through:

1. Government contracts
There are million and billion dollar contracts between state/federal governments and for-profit prisons. 65% of these contracts – including CoreCivic’s Cibola contract with ICE – contain occupancy guarantees of up to 100%, which require the government to fill a minimum number of the prisons’ beds. The government is forced to pay these industries with taxpayer money whether or not the beds are filled with individuals. Due to this incentive structure, political corruption of state, local and judicial officials is not only prevalent, but encouraged.

2. Policies that increase incarceration rates and criminalize immigrants
To ensure profit, CoreCivic and Geo Group have spent billions of dollars lobbying for policies which increase the supply of prisoners. With anti-immigrant and tough-on-crime policies like Operation Streamline, Secure Communities, SB1070 and copycat laws in various states, and attacks on comprehensive immigration reform, politicians are repaying their debt to their prison-funded campaign contributors. Their lobbying was also partially responsible for the infamous Federal Crime Bill of 1994 as well as the three strikes laws that led to inhumane rises in incarceration.

Private Prison industry stock dropped 40% after Obama’s 2016 executive order promising to stop usage of private prisons. One day later, Geo Group donated $100,000 to Trump’s SuperPac. Together, the two companies contributed $1.6 million to Republicans during the 2016 election cycle. CoreCivic stock rose 43% immediately after Trump’s Election. In 2017, they made more than $4 million in combined revenue due to the expected economic success. According to the Washington Post, the two corporations have “gifted” $10 million to candidates and pushed $25 million into lobbying efforts since 1989.

3. Cutting costs inside prisons at the cost of quality
The well-documented deplorable conditions of private prisons, in which inmates get assaulted, succumb to disease, or live in dire conditions are not an accident of the industry but tied to its very model. To increase the margin of profit, private prisons reduce costs tied to the prison wherever possible. Private prisons often cut corners when it comes to healthcare, food, security, guard payments, etc; resulting in higher rates of assault, medical malpractice, and atrocious quality of life.

“...growth is generally dependent upon our ability to obtain new contracts to develop and manage new correctional and detention facilities. This possible growth depends on a number of factors we cannot control, including crime rates and sentencing patterns in various jurisdictions and acceptance of privatization...The demand for our facilities and services could be adversely affected by the relaxation of enforcement efforts, leniency in conviction and sentencings practices or through the decriminalization of certain activities that are currently proscribed by our criminal laws.” 2005 CoreCivic report frankly stated to the SEC.