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August 26, 2015

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, I write to express my deep concern with language included in H.R. 3128, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) FY 2016 Appropriation Bill, maintaining funding to sustain an arbitrary bed quota that translates into a mandate for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to incarcerate over 34,000 immigrants.

Language included in the DHS appropriations bill committee report, H. Rept. 114-215, states that “\$1,694,000,000 is included to maintain an average of 34,040 daily detention beds.” This quota is unprecedented, as no other agency operates under a quota system, and enables the continuation of the largest immigration detention infrastructure in the world today.

LULAC joins other civil rights organizations in highlighting the negative impacts<sup>1</sup> of this bed detention quota. As reported by the Detention Watch Network:

- *The cost to maintain the detention industrial complex is excessive. In 2012, ICE detained an estimated 478,000 immigrants and the ICE's current detention budget is just short of \$2 billion. During a time of fiscal crisis, it is unacceptable to be spending billions in taxpayer dollars each year to needlessly detain immigrants to fill a quota.*
- *Having a quota on how many people must be locked up every day puts a **price tag on immigrant lives**. The policy leads to Congress and ICE treating immigrants as numbers filling a quota and products to be bought and sold, not as real people with children and loved ones depending on them.*
- *The quota not only impacts the hundreds and thousands of immigrants that go through the detention system each year, but also the families and communities that have been torn apart due to immigration detention.*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/EndTheQuotaNarrative>

- *The quota also **incentivizes targeting people for deportation** in order to fill jail cells. As politicians tout efforts towards comprehensive immigration reform and relief for those subject to deportation, any meaningful reforms to the immigration system will be impossible with the quota in place.*
- *With a guaranteed need for detention “beds” or jail cells, the detention bed quota essentially forces the use of **facilities that have poor track records** in which innumerable human rights abuses and dozens of deaths have occurred. These facilities have issues ranging from no access to the outdoor space, maggot- and worm-infested food, and wholly inadequate medical and mental health care.<sup>2</sup>*

In addition, according to a report by Grassroots Leadership<sup>3</sup>, the quota has played a part in the increase of the percent of the detained population held in private facilities with two major private prison corporations emerging as the leading benefactors of immigration detention policies: Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and GEO Group. According to the report, *these companies have profited handsomely from the artificial stability provided by the quota while contributing millions of dollars in federal lobbying expenditures and in campaign contributions to ensure their interests are met.*

As the Congress moves forward with the pending appropriation bill for fiscal year 2016, LULAC urges Members to strike the quota language from H.R. 3128. Congress must stop incentivizing the targeting of people for deportation and move to pass comprehensive immigration reform to truly address the pressing immigration challenges facing our country. For more information, please don't hesitate to have your staff contact Luis Torres, LULAC Director of Policy and Legislation, at [latorres@lulac.org](mailto:latorres@lulac.org) or by phone at (202) 833-6130.

Sincerely,



Roger C. Rocha, Jr.  
LULAC National President

<sup>2</sup> For more information visit: <http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/ExposeAndClose>

<sup>3</sup> For a copy of the report visit: [http://grassrootsleadership.org/sites/default/files/reports/quota\\_report\\_final\\_digital.pdf](http://grassrootsleadership.org/sites/default/files/reports/quota_report_final_digital.pdf)