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**Council President Wesson Moves to Outlaw Private Detention Centers in Los Angeles**  
*Proposal Would Change Zoning Code to Prohibit Construction, Continued Operations*

Los Angeles City Council President Herb Wesson has introduced a motion to outlaw the construction and continued operation of private detention centers within the City of Los Angeles. The proposal comes in the wake of reports of young children who have been separated from their parents at the US-Mexico border being detained in overcrowded areas without real beds or basic hygienic products like soap and toothpaste.

“Profiting off of locking people up will not fly in Los Angeles,” said Wesson. “This industry is an equal partner in the Trump administration’s cruel treatment of immigrant children and families, and the mass incarceration of communities of color. We call on every city and county to join us in preventing this kind of activity from operating within its borders.”

Specifically, Wesson’s motion instructs the City’s Planning Department and City Attorney to amend the City’s zoning code to prohibit any further construction or operation of private detention centers in the City of Los Angeles. In the motion, Wesson cited prisons who sign contracts with ICE worth millions of dollars every year and carry horrific records regarding human rights and living conditions for detained immigrants. The proposal was seconded by Councilmembers Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Nury Martinez, and Gil Cedillo, and is scheduled to be heard by the full Council on Wednesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The United States incarcerates more people in a year than anywhere else in the world, and in recent years private prisons have taken on a greater share of the prisoner population. The industry was started at the state level during the height of the War on Drugs as governments failed to keep up their capacity with the rising inmate populations.

As private entities, private detention centers are not subject to the same oversight and scrutiny as publicly-run prisons. The Obama Justice Department found in a 2016 study that federally-contracted private prisons had a significantly higher number of violations per inmate than public prisons – a 28 percent higher rate of inmate-on-inmate assaults and more than double the number of inmate-on-staff assaults.

Private prisons are responsible to their shareholders, not the general public, and cut costs by hiring fewer, less-skilled guards and cutting basic educational, medical, and recreation services for their inmates. Given that private detention centers generate revenue by securing government contracts, they have little incentive to actually rehabilitate prisoners, and instead are economically incentivized to keep recidivism rates high.

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