

To Mary Jane Saunders, President of Florida Atlantic University:

Your decision to name your university's new football stadium after the GEO Group, a for-profit prison company, sends an awful message to students and the nation. The GEO Group profits off of the incarceration of human beings; that's its business. Although business has been good — in 2011, its revenues were over \$1.6 billion — the GEO Group has a shameful record of human rights violations, abuse, and neglect at its facilities. Here are just a few examples:

- At a youth prison in Mississippi, the U.S. Justice Department determined that because of “systematic, egregious, and dangerous practices exacerbated by a lack of accountability and controls,” the GEO Group failed to provide adequate medical and mental health care, engaged in a pattern or practice of excessive force on kids, and endangered kids' safety. The report said that the youth prison averaged up to three injuries a day due to violence, and that the sexual misconduct committed by staff members was "among the worst we have seen in any facility anywhere in the nation."
- At a youth prison in Texas, state investigators deemed the conditions "filthy" and "unsafe." Auditors reportedly "got so much fecal matter on their shoes they had to wipe their feet on the grass outside" and children were "sometimes not allowed to brush their teeth for days at a time." The auditors also found racial discrimination: "Hispanics [were] not allowed to be cell mates with African Americans" and children were "disciplined for speaking Spanish."
- At an adult prison in Texas, a 32 year-old prisoner was found dead in his cell after spending a month in solitary confinement. According to court papers and news reports, the body wasn't even found until *rigor mortis* had set in. Court papers in the lawsuit filed by the ACLU of Texas state the man was an epileptic, his cell had no functioning intercom to call for help, and that he died of (predictably) an epileptic seizure.

With a history like this, it's no wonder the GEO Group is aggressive about protecting its own interests. Between 2003 and 2011, the GEO Group hired 72 lobbyists in 17 states and made contributions to over 400 candidates for office, nearly all of whom were incumbents. Now the GEO Group is contributing \$6 million to your school. Is that worth your school's soul? People are already dubbing the new stadium "Owlcatraz" for your team's mascot, the owl. What's next? Will the football team change its uniform to orange jumpsuits?

Ms. Saunders, you have said that the GEO Group is "a wonderful company" that you're "very proud to be partnered with." Perhaps you should think more about the message you're sending to students when you link your school with those who profit off of human misery. We demand that you reverse your plans to name the stadium after the GEO Group.

Sincerely,