



FREEDOM FOR IMMIGRANTS

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Re: Otay Mesa Visitation Policy in Violation of the ICE PBNDS 2011

Dear Mr. Paramo:

We write in regard to the visitation policy at the Otay Mesa Detention Facility in San Diego, California.

According to the CoreCivic (formerly the Corrections Corporation of America) information sheet on policies at Otay Mesa,¹ a person in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention at Otay Mesa can only be visited by those on their “approved visitation list.” The application process takes two business days and a person’s approved visitation list can only be updated every six months.

This visitation policy is a direct violation of ICE’s Performance-Based National Detention Standards (PBNDS) 2011, with which Otay Mesa Detention Facility is supposed to comply.² The PBNDS 2011 states clearly: “Facilities shall not require approved visitor lists from ICE/ERO detainees.”³

The PBNDS 2011 includes this specific policy presumably because ICE recognizes that approved visitation lists frequently pose a barrier to the ability of people to receive visits. In particular, people who are seeking asylum, who make up a large percentage of the people in ICE detention at Otay Mesa, may not have prior relationships with people within visiting distance of the detention facility or perhaps even throughout the United States. Even those who do have loved ones near the detention facility can face barriers in adding to or changing their approved visitation lists due to language difficulties or lack of orientation regarding visitation policy.

All other ICE-contracted prisons and county jails in California do not require an approved visitor list and are in compliance with this provision of the PBNDS 2011. As a result, we request that the visitation policy at Otay Mesa be changed immediately to ensure that people can be visited by anyone, not only those on their approved visitation lists.

We expect to receive a timely response regarding this matter by [date].

Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,



Christina Fialho
Co-Founder/Executive Director



Christina Mansfield
Co-Founder/Executive Director

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¹ “CoreCivic Otay Mesa Detention Center.” p. 4.

<https://www.corecivic.com/hubfs/facilities/files/Otay%20Mesa%20Detention%20Center%20Information%20Final%201%2017%2018.pdf>

² “Office of Detention Oversight Compliance Inspection: San Diego Contract Detention Facility, San Diego, California, April 14–16, 2015.” p. 3.

<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/odo-compliance-inspections/SanDiegoContractDetentionFacilityApr14-16-2015.pdf>

³ “Visitation.” p. 397. <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/detention-standards/2011/5-7.pdf>

