

P R E S S R E L E A S E

For Immediate Release

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PRISON LEGAL NEWS SUES THE GEO GROUP FOR PUBLIC RECORDS RELATING TO LAWSUITS FILED AGAINST THE COMPANY

On Dec. 2, 2005, Prison Legal News, a non-profit organization based in Seattle, Washington, filed a civil suit against The Geo Group, Inc. (formerly Wackenhut Corrections) in the Circuit Court for Palm Beach, Florida, demanding access to public records held by the company.

Prison Legal News publishes a monthly newsletter of the same name concerning the legal rights of prisoners and news and litigation relating to other criminal justice issues. The newsletter is distributed nationally and has over 4,600 subscribers, most of whom are incarcerated.

The Geo Group is a for-profit company that operates privatized prisons, including two Florida correctional facilities, and its contract-based fees are paid with public (taxpayer) funds. Pursuant to Florida's public records law, The Geo Group is required to produce requested public records.

Prison Legal News submitted written public record requests to The Geo Group in April of this year requesting information related to lawsuits that resulted in settlements or verdicts against the company, as well as contract audits, violations and court-ordered injunctions. While The Geo Group provided a limited amount of information related to one category of the requested records, it ignored the other requests and never responded to a second record request submitted in September.

In its lawsuit, Prison Legal News alleges The Geo Group's failure to provide the requested public records is illegal, malicious and willful, and is designed to delay Prison Legal News from obtaining the records because they are critical of The Geo Group's operation of privatized prisons. The requested records would likely reveal details related to sexual harassment claims, riots and other disturbances, staff on prisoner attacks, prisoner on prisoner attacks, inadequate medical care, contract sanctions and other penalties, and court orders and injunctions against the company. The Geo Group has a lengthy nationwide record of abuses and security incidents at its privately-operated facilities.

Prison Legal News further claims The Geo Group's contracts for the operation of state correctional facilities are extremely profitable for the company. However, without the requested records the public cannot accurately determine whether or not the state, and the taxpayers, are receiving their money's worth and a fair return based on the contractual requirements, or whether those funds are being appropriately allocated for the prison-related services needed and paid for by the state.

Prison Legal News has previously filed lawsuits in other jurisdictions to obtain public records after government agencies refused to provide the requested information, and is one of the few organizations that is willing to litigate to obtain prison-related records that by law should be made available to the public.

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More information about Prison Legal News is available at: www.prisonlegalnews.org.