

December 5, 2014

William Powers, Jr.  
President  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Office of the President  
110 Inner Campus Drive, Stop G3400  
Austin, Texas 78712-3400

Dear President Powers:

We, the undersigned faculty members of the University of Texas at Austin, are alarmed to learn of the role Red McCombs is playing in the construction of a 2,400-bed family detention center in Dilley, Texas. The Dilley detention center will be the largest in the country and will house families, mainly mothers and young children, most of whom are seeking asylum or related protection in the United States.

The Koontz-McCombs firm, headed by its Chairman and COO Red McCombs, has leased its own land for the construction of this massive detention center. By doing so, Koontz-McCombs is supporting the dramatic expansion of private for-profit family detention centers. The Dilley detention center will be managed by the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and will expand the jailing of mothers and children who are escaping violent victimization in Central America by twofold. This expansion of family detention is opposed by child welfare advocates, public health and environmental impact experts, immigration and human rights lawyers, members of faith-based communities, and many others. Family detention also contravenes international human rights principles requiring that detention of immigrants be used as a last resort and prohibiting detention of children and asylum seekers except in the most extreme circumstances, which are not present here.

The moral, physical, and legal dangers posed by the new detention center in Dilley have been well catalogued. We mention only a few here but link below to letters from non-governmental organizations, associations of immigration lawyers, law professors and pro bono counsel, and law faculty from the Civil Rights Clinic at the University of Texas at Austin that carefully detail the harm and rights violations committed by detaining refugee children and families.

- Family detention hinders the legal rights of the most vulnerable asylum seekers.
- Family detention causes permanent harm to the physical and mental health of young children, compounding the trauma they have experienced in their home countries.
- Family detention is unnecessary. Most asylum seekers appear for their immigration proceedings after release from detention. Many asylum seeking mothers and children have family in the United States where they can live while pursuing their asylum cases

and enjoy the support of religious and other communities. Alternatives to detention, such as reporting requirements, can ensure appearance in court and are more humane and more cost effective.

- The Dilley detention center will be managed by a private prison company with a problematic record.

- International human rights law is clear that family detention violates the universal rights of children.

Red McCombs is a proud and generous friend of the University of Texas at Austin. His love for the university has won him respect and admiration from many Longhorns. He is honored in the football stadium with a statue in the Red McCombs Red Zone. The business school bears his name. Given UT's special relationship with Red McCombs, we think it appropriate for the university to ask him to reconsider the lease in Dilley. The business arrangement that allows for the opening of the Dilley facility puts Red McCombs and his business at the center of the immoral expansion of family detention. The UT administration should bring this reality to his attention.

Letter from 135 advocacy, legal, and other organizations to President Barack Obama (Nov. 18, 2014), available at <http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=50742>.

Letter from Trisha Trigilio, Fellow, University of Texas Civil Rights Clinic, *et al.* to Teresa R. Pohlman, Director of Sustainability and Environmental Programs, Department of Homeland Security, and Susan Bromm, Director of the Office of Federal Activities, Environmental Protection Agency (Oct. 30, 2014), available at [http://www.utexas.edu/law/clinics/civilrights/doc/Impact\\_of\\_Family\\_Detention\\_Center\\_in\\_Dilley.pdf](http://www.utexas.edu/law/clinics/civilrights/doc/Impact_of_Family_Detention_Center_in_Dilley.pdf).

Letter from David A. Lash, Managing Counsel, and Steven H. Schulman, President, Association of Pro Bono Counsel to Alejandro Mayorkas, Deputy Secretary, Department of Homeland Security (Oct. 13, 2014), available at <http://www.apbco.org/news/unaccompanied-minors-letter-dhs-deputy-secretary-ali-mayorkas/>.

Letter from 168 immigrants' rights, faith-based, civil rights, and other organizations to President Barack Obama (Sept. 25, 2014), available at <http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/press-room/2156-ngos-united-in-opposition-to-family-detention-in-dilley-karnes-and-artesia>.

Letter from Leslie Holman, President, American Immigration Lawyers Association, *et al.* to Members of the United States Congress (Sept. 16, 2014), available at <http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=50093>.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Young  
Associate Professor  
Department of Sociology

Along with:

Ari Adut, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology  
William P. Allison, Clinical Professor, School of Law and Director, Criminal Defense Clinic  
Ronald J. Angel, Professor, Department of Sociology  
Javier Auyero, Professor, Department of Sociology  
Bill Beardall, Clinical Professor, School of Law and Director, Transnational Worker Rights  
Clinic  
Brian A. Bremen, Associate Professor, Department of English  
Simone Browne, Assistant Professor, African and African Diaspora Studies  
Jason Brownlee, Associate Professor, Department of Government  
Luis E. Cárcamo-Huechante, Associate Professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese  
Ben Carrington, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology  
Mia Carter, Associate Professor, Department of English  
Shannon Cavanagh, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology  
Donna De Cesare, Associate Professor, School of Journalism  
Dana Cloud, Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies  
Cary Cordova, Assistant Professor, Department of American Studies  
Mary Crouter, Clinical Professor, School of Law  
Janet M. Davis, Associate Professor, Departments of American Studies, History, and Center for  
Women's and Gender Studies  
Tiffany Dowling, Clinical Instructor, School of Law  
Lori Duke, Clinical Professor, School of Law  
Ariel Dulitzky, Clinical Professor, School of Law, and Director, Human Rights Clinic  
Karen L. Engle, Minerva House Drysdale Regents Chair in Law, School of Law  
Daniel Fridman, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology  
Denise L. Gilman, Clinical Professor, School of Law, and Co-Director, Immigration Clinic  
Jennifer Glass, Barbara Bush Regents Professor of Liberal Arts, Department of Sociology and  
Population Research Center  
Alfonso Gonzales, Assistant Professor, Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies  
Gloria González-López, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Charles R. Hale, Professor, Departments of Anthropology and African and African American  
Diaspora Studies

Patricia Isela Hansen, J. Waddy Bullion Professor, School of Law

Kelly Haragan, Clinical Professor, School of Law

Barbara Harlow, Professor, Department of English

Susan Sage Heinzelman, Associate Professor, Department of English

Barbara Hines, Clinical Professor, School of Law, and Co-Director, Immigration Clinic

Heather Houser, Assistant Professor, Department of English

Robert Jensen, Professor, School of Journalism

Anne Lewis, Senior Lecturer, Moody College of Communication, RTF

Ken-Hou Lin, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology

Noah De Lissovoy, Associate Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Jim Marcus, Clinical Professor, School of Law

Leticia Marteleto, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Population Research Center

Frances Leos Martinez, Clinical Professor, School of Law

Mona Mehdy, Associate Professor, Department of Molecular Biosciences

Jeffrey L. Meikle, Stiles Professor in American Studies, Professor of Art History

Martha Menchaca, Professor, Department of Anthropology

Gabriel Díaz Montemayor, Assistant Professor, School of Architecture

Chandra Muller, Centennial Professor, Department of Sociology

Ranjana Natarajan, Clinical Professor, School of Law and Director, Civil Rights Clinic

Robert Oppenheim, Associate Professor, Department of Asian Studies

Deborah Palmer, Associate Professor, Bilingual/Bicultural Education, Department of Curriculum  
and Instruction

Gabriela Polit, Associate Professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Kelly Raley, Professor, Department of Sociology

Mark Regnerus, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Bryan R Roberts, C.B. Smith Chair in US-Mexico Relations and Professor, Department of  
Sociology

Nestor Rodriguez, Professor, Department of Sociology

Mary Rose, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Sharmila Rudrappa, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Raoul Schonemann, Clinical Professor, School of Law

Harel Shapira, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology

Snehal Shingavi, Assistant Professor, Center for Asian American Studies

Mark C. Smith, Associate Professor, Departments of American Studies and History

Shannon Speed, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology

Janet Staiger, William P. Hobby Centennial Professor Emeritus in Communication and Professor  
Emeritus of Women's and Gender Studies,

Department of Radio-Television-Film

Mollie Stemper, Clinical Instructor, School of Law

Leslie Strauch, Clinical Professor, School of Law

Pauline Turner Strong, Professor, Department of Anthropology

Eric Tang, Assistant Professor, African and African Diaspora Studies and Center for Asian American Studies

Trisha Trigilio, Fellow, School of Law Civil Rights Clinic

Debra Umberson, Centennial Professor in Liberal Arts, Department of Sociology

Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte, Associate Professor, Emeritus, School of Journalism, Affiliate, Latin American Studies, American Studies, Women and Gender Studies

Luis Urrieta, Jr., Associate Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Angela Valenzuela, Professor, Department of Educational Administration

Heather Way, Clinical Professor, School of Law

Christine L. Williams, Professor, Department of Sociology

Emilio Zamora, Professor, Department of History

Pilar Zazueta, Lecturer, Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies