

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All House Members

**FROM:** Representative Babette Josephs

**DATE:** November 15, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Co-Sponsorship of Legislation to amend Title 65 (Public Officers) further providing for definitions and restricted activities.

I will soon introduce legislation to include as a restricted activity for public officials and public employees, their families and domestic partners, any contractual or sub-contractual arrangement valued at \$500 or more that involves detention services provided to individuals detained for determination of immigrant status.

Detention services have become big money. Two particular companies dominate the industry: The Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and GEO Group, formerly a part of Wackenhut, operate their own facilities and contract with state and local governments to administer publicly owned facilities. Both are listed on the New York Stock Exchange and are doing very well.

But, surely our collective memories cannot be so short that we do not remember and deplore the "Cash for Kids" scandal of very recent years where children going through our Juvenile Justice System were inappropriately sent by the judges presiding over their cases to privately owned and operated juvenile detention centers – which paid the judges for the favor.

We must prevent a similar scandal from occurring involving detainees, whose number is increasing dramatically. Whether the undocumented are detained appropriately or inappropriately, constitutionally or unconstitutionally, will be determined by the federal government. But Pennsylvania must at least govern its own behavior regarding detainees, and the first step is to prevent all public officials, public employees or any of their family members or partners, from benefitting financially from the detention of undocumented persons.

If you wish to cosponsor this legislation, contact Jenn Belz at [jbelz@pahouse.net](mailto:jbelz@pahouse.net) or at 787-8529.