

End Immigrant Family Detention

No more families behind bars

FAQ Immigrant Family Detention

What is immigrant family detention?

The Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detains families while they await hearings on their immigration status. Families are held in one of two facilities: the T. Don Hutto center, a converted medium security prison in Taylor, Texas, or at the Berks County Family Shelter, a former nursing home, near Reading, Pennsylvania.

Who is detained?

Undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees from all over the world. T. Don Hutto has detained families from more than 40 different countries.

How many families are incarcerated?

We're not sure exactly how many families but, we do know that as of February, 2009 T. Don Hutto held 130 children from birth to age 17. The Pennsylvania facility is smaller holding about 80 people.

When did immigrant family detention start?

The Berks County Family Care Shelter near Reading, Pennsylvania, opened in March of 2001. T. Don Hutto opened as a family detention center in May of 2006.

Who runs the detention centers?

T. Don Hutto is run by the for-profit Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). CCA is the nation's largest owner and operator of privatized correctional and detention centers, with 63 facilities in 19 states and the District of Columbia. The Berks County facility is owned and operated by Berks County, PA.

What is the goal of family detention?

ICE argues that family detention is necessary to ensure immigrants attend immigration hearings. However, alternatives to detention have been shown to be effective.

What are the alternatives?

Alternatives to family detention include release on personal recognizance, the use of reasonable personal bonds, and supervised release programs. A study by the Vera Institute found that more than 93% of immigrants on a supervised release program attended their immigration hearings. The average cost of a supervision program is \$12 a day compared to reportedly over \$200 a day to detain a person at Hutto.

What is the future of immigrant family detention?

The Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has proposed building three more family detention centers. We're working hard to stop that expansion and close the existing detention centers.

