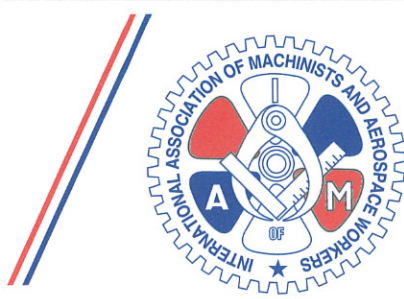


**International  
Association of  
Machinists and  
Aerospace Workers**



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OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

August 17, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the International Association of Machinists (“IAM”) and the National Federation of Federal Employers (“NFFE-IAM”), and the hundreds of thousands of workers that we proudly represent in the United States, we write to seek your immediate assistance to save the Western Region Detention Facility (WRDF) located in downtown San Diego, California. There are approximately 300 Machinists Union and NFFE-IAM members who perform a critical function in our society by working at this facility, which is currently operating on a U.S. Marshals Service (“USMS”) contract that is set to expire on September 30, 2021. On that date, each of these 300 hard-working proud union members who are employed by GEO will lose their good-paying union jobs at one of the most difficult times imaginable. It will be simply devastating to these workers, their families, and the communities in which they live. Thankfully, it is within your power to keep this crushing closure from happening by allowing USMS to extend its contract with GEO.

We are very pleased to see that your Administration is receptive to continuing USMS contracts under certain circumstances which involve a public/private partnership, such as was done earlier this year in Youngstown, Ohio. The USMS does not have the statutory authority to own or operate detention facilities; therefore, the use of contractor owned and operated detention space is essential to the USMS’s ability to house prisoners pending adjudication. There simply is not enough bed space to accommodate the more than 23,000 USMS prisoners housed in contractor owned and operated facilities, operating under direct contract with USMS, or under contract with the state and local governments elsewhere in the system. Eliminating the bed space that private sector operators provide, and the critical jobs that 1,200 of our members perform in this industry nationwide, would severely hurt the ability of USMS to carry out its mission. Your Administration’s prudent decision to allow some USMS contracts with private sector operators to continue was essential, and we applaud it.

In that spirit, your Administration should allow USMS to extend its contract with GEO to keep the WRDF open and avert closure as the WRDF and our members provide USMS with appropriate resources to carry out their important mission. GEO was awarded the contract starting in September of 2017 and it expires in September of 2027 if all options are exercised. USMS has strongly indicated it would like to exercise those options and we ask that your Administration not stand in the way of USMS doing so.

There is little doubt that WRDF is essential to the San Diego area. In a May 6, 2021 letter from William D. Gore, the Sheriff of San Diego County to U.S. Marshals Service, Gore states, “As a former Special Agent in Charge of the San Diego FBI, I’m keenly aware of the dire need for federal detention beds in San Diego. For this and other reasons I strongly support the continued

operation of this facility at its current location. Since there are no comparable facilities in the Southwest, its closure would have a significant adverse impact on public safety in the region.”

The loss of the WRDF would have a devastating economic impact locally, over \$30 million annually. This includes the loss of approximately 300 good paying jobs. The average base rate of pay for our members at this facility is \$31.58 an hour, while the average hourly rate in San Diego is just \$23.13. This layoff would be particularly hard on these workers and this community given that the San Diego-Carlsbad, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country – currently 7.0%. Allowing this closure when it could easily be averted would be nothing short of cruel and inconsistent with the values of this Administration.

Allowing the closure of the WRDF and other unionized detention facilities runs 100% counter to your commitment to help more workers in this country gain union representation. On April 26, 2021, you signed an Executive Order establishing the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, which is dedicated to “mobilizing the federal government’s policies, programs, and practices to empower workers to organize and successfully bargain with their employers.” We applaud you for signing that Executive Order. However, maintaining a policy that forces the closure of union facilities like WRDF – especially a policy that is being selectively enforced – is the opposite of mobilizing federal government’s policies to empower workers to organize. During these first months of your Administration, both our unions have been organizing this industry more successfully than ever before. We urge you to stand by your commitment to help grow union representation in this country by protecting union jobs, not eliminating them.

Last Friday, layoff notices were handed out to our 300 members at WRDF. Each of them went home to their wives, husbands, and children to break the bad news that they are being laid off and that hard times are ahead.

It was a sad day for these members, but your Administration has the ability to change that. We respectfully ask that you stand with these hard-working Americans and save these 300 good union jobs.

Sincerely,



Robert Martinez, Jr.  
International President  
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO



Randy Erwin  
National President  
National Federation of Federal Employees, IAMAW, AFL-CIO