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Nevada bans use of private prisons

Contributed

Jun 11, 2019

Late last month, Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak signed into law AB183, a bill which would ban the use of private prisons for core services, such as housing and custody.

Nevada now joins Iowa, New York, and Illinois in establishing this type of prohibition.

During the 2017 legislative session, Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno introduced AB303, an Assembly bill that contained similar language banning private prisons.

However, then-Gov. Brian Sandoval vetoed the bill and subsequently signed a \$9.2 million two-year contract with CoreCivic, a private prison company, to house 200 Nevadan inmates in a private correctional facility in Arizona. The company, formerly known as Corrections Corporation of America, had a notoriously poor track record with regard to inmate safety.

Shortly after their transfer to the facility, some of the inmates went on a hunger strike to protest their treatment. Reports at the time noted allegations of inadequate medical care, retaliation and other forms of mistreatment against the inmates.

In addition to these issues, lawmakers also had concerns that contract was hastily thought out and too costly to Nevada taxpayers.

“As a retired corrections officer, I have seen firsthand the need for improved services and reforms in our criminal justice system,” said Monroe-Moreno, the bill’s primary sponsor. “Outlawing for-profit prisons once and for all will better help us achieve a criminal justice system of equity, integrity, and fairness — a system that views prisoners as people instead of profit margins.”

Under AB183, the provisions prohibiting the Department of Corrections from contracting with private prisons will go into effect July 1, 2022.