**New Report: Corrections Companies Pay Professional Corrections Associations to Access Government Officials**

**Washington, DC – August 10, 2015:** This week, a major professional corrections association, the American Correctional Association (ACA), will hold its annual conference. Corporate sponsors include a who’s who of private corrections companies, including Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), GEO Group, Aramark, Corizon, and Telmate. A new report, released last Thursday by In the Public Interest, reveals how conferences like ACA’s allow corrections companies to influence government officials in ways outside the public’s oversight.

The report, titled, “[*Buying Access: How Corporations Influence Decision Makers at Corrections Conferences, Trainings, and Meetings*](http://www.inthepublicinterest.org/buying-access-how-corporations-influence-decision-makers-at-corrections-conferences-trainings-and-meetings/)*”*, explores the troubling connections between corrections companies and professional corrections associations that work with thousands of government officials, including state Department of Corrections staff, wardens, jail administrators, and sheriffs. The report details how companies pay professional corrections associations for the opportunity to build relationships with decision makers to help them secure government contracts in spite of track records of providing low-quality services that harm prisoners, communities, and taxpayers.

“The public has a right to monitor companies’ involvement in professional corrections associations,” said Executive Director of In the Public Interest, Donald Cohen. “It’s important to ensure that the relationships created at these conferences do not pad companies’ bottom lines to the detriment of the overall public good.”

In 2014, sponsors, vendors, corporate partners, and others contributed at least $3 million to five of the largest professional corrections associations, including the ACA, the American Jail Association (AJA), the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA), the Corrections Technology Association (CTA), and the National Sheriffs’ Association.

In return, corrections companies are able to build relationships with and influence decision makers, many of whom are responsible for making contracting decisions, with no oversight by the public. The report makes the case for stronger disclosure rules that would require professional corrections associations to make public the contributions they receive from corrections companies and the opportunities those companies receive to influence decision makers.

“With transparency, the public would be able to ensure that corrections contracts, programs, and policies protect the public interest,” said Cohen.

The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.inthepublicinterest.org/buying-access-how-corporations-influence-decision-makers-at-corrections-conferences-trainings-and-meetings/>.

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