



ICE to open immigrant detention center in Texas at site of former prison

BY MORGAN GSTALTER - 07/05/18 11:45 AM EDT

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Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is slated to open a new detention center for undocumented immigrants at the site of a Texas prison that closed in 2015 after an inmate uprising.

Willacy County commissioners have approved the contract for a 1,000-bed ICE facility, the Valley Star [reported](#) on Tuesday.

The detention center will open at the site of the former Willacy County Correctional Center in Raymondville, about 50 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border.

The prison closed in March 2015, a month after rioting inmates destroyed much of the facility, the Valley Star reported.

County Judge Aurelio Guerra told commissioners that officials have been trying for several years to find a contract to fill the property and boost the local economy.

The prison's closure resulted in 400 employees being laid off.

"The jobs are needed and Willacy County remains in need of improving the local economy," Guerra said. "We're still in need of circulating dollars."

President Trump's immigration policies have been at the center of a nationwide debate in recent weeks.

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His "zero tolerance" policy called for prosecution of all migrants who crossed the southern border illegally, leading to an influx at immigration detention centers. More than two dozen immigrant youth shelters in Texas have been approved to operate over capacity.

Trump's policy resulted in more than 2,000 immigrant children being separated from their families and housed in different facilities while awaiting prosecution, sparking backlash from both Democrats and Republicans.

Trump eventually signed an executive order designed to end family separations, but thousands of previously separated families have yet to be reunited.

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