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30+ A-List Celebs And Athletes Will Divest From Private Prison Investments

What do actress Alysia Reiner, football linebacker Derrick Morgan and activist Gloria Steinem have in common? Aside from being super A-list celebrities, that is. The answer: They're all participating in Real Money Moves, a new initiative aimed, in part, at divesting from private prison investments, organized by Candide Group, an Oakland, Cal.-based impact investment advisory firm with a focus on social justice. Some of these celebs also have committed to becoming impact investors. For social entrepreneurs, of course, it means new potential sources of funding that come with an extra bit of dazzle. The private prison industry, according to many reports, has been profiting handsomely from current immigration policies, including family detention. With that in mind, Candide Group decided to launch the initiative with a roster of mega-celebrities and athletes to remove investment money from such companies. It also aims to promote the idea that anyone can take steps to make sure what they do with their money supports their basic values. "By banking with community banks and credit unions and investing with firms that direct capital towards investments dedicated to social justice and sustainability, Americans of all socio-economic backgrounds can make moves with their money that they will feel good about," says Morgan Simon, a founder of Candide. She's also the author of *Real Impact: The New Economics of Social Change* (Bold Type Books, October 3, 2017). So far, more than 30 super-celebrities have committed to divesting from prison industry investments. Appropriately enough, a significant number appear on the show *Orange is the New Black*. (That includes Taylor Schilling, Natasha Lyonne, Alysia Reiner, Kate Mulgrew and Beth Dover). A subset of the group, including Morgan, have committed over \$10 million to impact investing more broadly. The exact form that will take is up to the individual. "Investing is about building a legacy," said Morgan in a press release. "That means not just building wealth, but being conscious about what that wealth does in the world." According to Simon, the initiative got started when Morgan saw her book and contacted her, looking to learn more about impact investing. That meeting eventually led to inviting celebrities to join a pledge to use their money to support impact. When the family separation crisis happened last year, they started examining the ways private prisons were profiting to the tune of over \$1 billion a year from contracts with ICE, according to Simon. "We want to inspire people to take action," says Simon. "One of our jobs as impact investors is to change the culture of money."