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GEO Group calls allegations about immigration detentions 'malicious lies'

BOCA RATON, Fla. -- One of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's single largest private prison contractors, GEO Group, contends that a Florida-based human rights group is committing libel and defamation for protesting its practices. The human rights group Dream Defenders has been protesting the work of Boca Raton-based GEO Group and has labeled GEO a "dream killer," alleging that GEO has separated immigrant families and caged children. Responding to the Dream Defenders' allegations, GEO recently issued a cease-and-desist letter and accused the civil rights group of inciting violence. GEO Group commented on the situation to the Florida Record, stating the claims made by Dream Defenders are false. "Their allegations are outrageous and based on malicious lies about our company," GEO Group told Florida Record. "And, as they have publicly acknowledged, their attacks on our company and our employees are nothing but a deliberate attempt to advance a controversial public policy agenda aimed at abolishing ICE." While GEO said that Dream Defenders' allegations are without merit and false, the rights group has stood by its statements, even providing proof of their claims. Additionally, the ACLU has sided with Dream Defenders and stated that the statements are well within its rights to free speech, according to a Miami New Times article. "The ACLU goes on to explain that threats from major corporations such as GEO tend to have a chilling effect on political speech, even if a nonprofit knows its complaints are factually true, it can still be costly to defend true statements in court from bogus legal threats," the article said. GEO Group said its commitment is to protect its employees. "Our top priority is ensuring the safety of our employees and those in our care, and we will take all necessary legal actions to prevent deliberate attempts to create disruption and incite violence against our employees and facilities," GEO Group said.