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Joe Biden Says 'Give Me Five Days' to Hecklers Calling for Closure of Detention Centers

President Joe Biden responded to protesters who demanded that he shut down detention centers by asking for "another five days" and vowing to close all private prisons during a speech in Georgia. The president traveled to the Peach State on Thursday and visited with former President Jimmy Carter before attending a drive-in rally to mark his first 100 days in office and promote the \$4 trillion spending proposals that he outlined one day earlier during an address to Congress. Minutes after Biden's speech began, a small group of protesters interrupted it by shouting demands that he "end detention now" and "abolish" Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). "I agree with you. I'm working on it, man," Biden said. "Give me another five days." The president said that he believed the group was referring to "private prisons" moments later, while promising that he was working on the issue. "Folks, you all know what they're talking about," said Biden. "There should be no private prisons, period... none, period. That's what they're talking about, private detention centers. They should not exist and we are working to close all of them... I promise you." Not long after Biden took office, he signed an executive order aimed at closing all privately-run federal prisons. Most private prisons in the U.S. were unaffected by the order because they are run at the state level. The order also did not apply to immigration detention centers, many of which continue to be run privately. Biden's 2020 campaign platform insisted that the future president would "make clear that the federal government should not use private facilities for any detention, including detention of undocumented immigrants." Newsweek reached out to the White House for comment. Biden's immigration policies have received considerable criticism in the months since he took office. A number of Republicans blamed a surge of migrants arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border, particularly unaccompanied minors, on Biden rolling back the policies of former President Donald Trump. Although temporary holding facilities at the Southern border have been packed, ICE is currently detaining far fewer undocumented immigrants overall than during the Trump administration—an average of less than 15,000 per day, down from a peak of more than 56,000 in 2019. Regardless, some progressives have expressed outrage that any detentions continue and called for an end to both ICE and the detention centers.