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## Be Better Belmont town hall urges school to cut ties from CoreCivic

By: [Dulce Torres Guzman](#) - October 8, 2020 8:01 pm



The Milton and Denise Johnson Building at Belmont University (Photo by Jason Davis/Getty Images)

The for-profit prison system is akin to slavery, said a speaker Wednesday during the meeting of a Belmont University student group urging the school to cut ties with CoreCivic.

Be Better Belmont hosted a town hall meeting focused on the Nashville-based private correctional company and its financial contributions to Belmont University amid rising racial tensions in Nashville.

Melisande Short-Colomb, a third-year Georgetown University student and activist speaking at the event, likened the prison system to slavery, calling both the "snatching of bodies." She spoke of her family's history as indentured servants later sold by Georgetown University and briefly spoke about Belmont University's own history with slavery through Adelia Acklen, whose mansion has built by slaves.

Nashville officials and CoreCivic recently severed an agreement through which CoreCivic operated Davidson County jails, but members of BeBetter Belmont continue to urge Belmont President Dr. Bob Fisher to remove Damon Hininger, CoreCivic CEO, from Belmont's Board of Trustees.

Dr. Fisher did not respond to an invitation to attend the meeting.



Dr. Bob Fisher,  
President, Belmont  
University (Photo:  
Samuel  
Simpkins/Belmont  
University)

In a time of rising tensions, Be Better Belmont asks Dr. Fisher to combat racism through clarity, transparency and accountability of their financial

practices with CoreCivic.

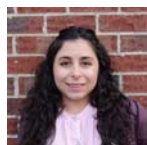
For-profit prison systems disproportionately affect people of color, said Rev. Davie Tucker, who was previously a prison employee, and was inspired to pursue the issue.

“I could see how human bodies were turned into a commodity and had a price,” said Rev. Tucker.

Another advocate, Cathy Carrillo, recalled how in the last few months, prisons have been the site of several COVID-19 outbreaks and how CoreCivic benefited financially from contracts with U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE.).

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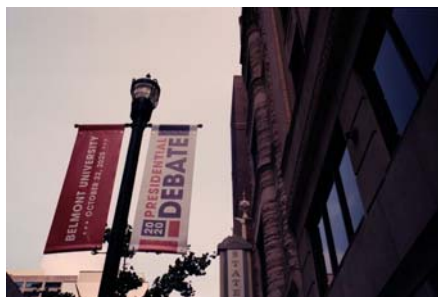
Dulce has written for the Nashville Scene and Crucero News. A graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, she received the John Seigenthaler Award for Outstanding Graduate in Print Journalism in 2016. Torres Guzman is a member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. She enjoys the outdoors and is passionate about preserving the environment and environmental issues.

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