

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 7, 2018

Acting Director Hugh Hurwitz  
Federal Bureau of Prisons  
U.S. Department of Justice  
320 First Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20534

Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General of the United States  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Acting Director Hurwitz and Attorney General Sessions:

We are concerned by the recent staffing cuts at the Federal Correctional Complex in Pollock, Louisiana, and the Federal Correctional Complex in Oakdale, Louisiana. The safety of the men and women who work in these facilities is of the utmost importance, and we urge you to increase the staffing levels at these facilities in order to ensure a safer environment.

The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is cutting over 6,000 positions nationwide, an 11% reduction nationwide. The four BOP facilities in Louisiana will all be affected. Two of these facilities are in Pollock—United States Penitentiary (USP) Pollock and Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) Pollock—and two facilities are in Oakdale—FCI #1 Oakdale and FCI #2 Oakdale.

USP Pollock is a High Security Facility housing the worst of the worst offenders, but BOP has eliminated 90 staffing positions there. USP Pollock is the one of the most dangerous facilities in the nation, and there have been many acts of violence involving inmates, including against staff. This facility needs more staffing for the safety of everyone, including inmates and visitors.

At the Federal Correctional Complex in Pollock, inmate-on-staff assaults have been severe. Staff have been stabbed, beaten, and bitten. Some staff suffered brain damage, and some required reconstructive surgery from fractured facial bones and stab wounds. Just recently, six staff required treatment at a hospital after being assaulted by inmates using the ubiquitous K2 drug.

At the Federal Correctional Complex in Oakdale, BOP has eliminated 77 staffing positions. In October 2017, two inmates at FCC Oakdale attempting to escape reached the last perimeter fence before being apprehended by staff. If the inmates had successfully escaped, they would have endangered the neighboring community hospital, doctor offices and residential neighborhoods.

In 2015, the director of the BOP testified that the inmate-to-staff ratio “remains high at 4.4 to 1.” In July 2017, the Senate Appropriations Committee specifically stated it was “concerned that the

Department of Justice (DOJ) has maintained the January 20, 2017, Federal Government hiring freeze for BOP when the DOJ has since lifted the moratorium for other DOJ agencies. The inmate to correctional officer ratio is currently 8.3 to 1, a level that is unsafe and should immediately be corrected.”

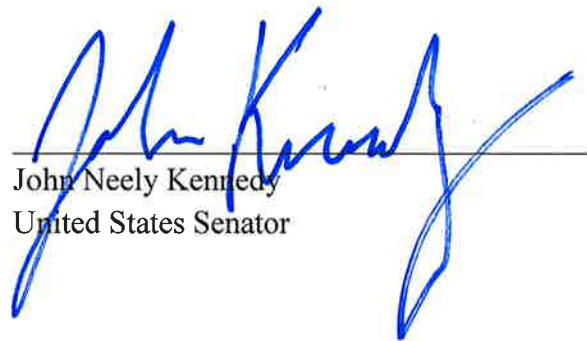
We urge you to increase staffing to the levels before BOP initiated the hiring freeze in January 2017. Prison staffing levels that are inherently dangerous for both prison staff and inmates are unacceptable. Eliminating over 6,000 positions nationwide will not help this problem. We expect the DOJ and BOP to maintain the correctional officer-to-inmate ratio necessary to ensure prison workers are able to work in a safe and secure environment, and prisoners are properly supervised.

We ask that you reconsider the decision to reduced staff at these Louisiana facilities so that we can keep the men and women who work at these facilities safe.

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator



John Neely Kennedy  
United States Senator



Ralph Abraham, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson  
Member of Congress