



AFGE Local #
Council of Prison Locals #33, AFL-CIO
Facility Type
Town, State



Date

TO: **The Honorable Congress Member's Name**

FROM: **Your Name and Title**

SUBJECT: **FY 2011 Federal Budget**

Dear **Congress Member's Name**:

I am the Local Union President of AFGE Local #, AFL-CIO at the **Facility Type** in **Town, State**.

I am writing to you to express the concerns of the employees that I represent regarding the delays in the passage of a budget for the FY2011 operations of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the looming threat of a government shutdown.

Prior to the current continuing resolution, the House proposed a long term CR that would have appropriated 6.47 billion dollars for the BOP for FY2011; similarly, the Senate Appropriations Committee put forth a figure of 6.53 billion. These proposed levels of funding would have helped our agency deal with several crises that have reached critical states of urgency.

Overcrowding: The federal inmate population has increased dramatically over the last 10 years; there has been a net increase of over 60,000 inmates since 2000. Due to this constant influx of federal offenders, the BOP is dependent on appropriate levels of Buildings & Facilities (B&F) funding in order to open up new bed space to accommodate our growing inmate populations (the current federal inmate population stands at 210,000, with a net increase of approximately 7,000 inmates in the last year alone). Proposed FY2011 funding for the Bureau of Prisons included a 170.5 million dollar increase in our Buildings and Facilities budget. That level of funding would allow the BOP to activate and staff the two completed facilities at Mendota, CA and Berlin, NH, bringing 3,000 medium security beds online; both facilities are sitting empty at this moment, their activation frozen because of the current CR. An increase in B&F funding will also facilitate the purchase of the high security prison facility in Thomson Illinois, adding a desperately needed 1,600 high security beds to the BOP and helping to mitigate the fact that high security prisons in the BOP are currently operating at over 52% of their rated capacity nationwide.

Unsafe Levels of Staffing: Over time, staffing levels have not kept pace with the increasing number of inmates placed in our system; by the end of 2010, the BOP system was staffed at an 89% level (35,839 of 40,279 authorized positions were filled), as contrasted with the 95% staffing percentage levels in the mid- 1990s. This 89% staffing level is below the 90% staffing level that BOP believes to be the minimum staffing level for maintaining the safety and security of BOP prisons. The current BOP inmate-to-staff ratio is 5 inmates to 1 staff member, as contrasted with the 1997 inmate-to-staff ratio of 3.7 to 1.

In order to return to the safe ratio of staff to inmates that the agency operated under for decades, we would ultimately need to hire over 9,000 new staff. We understand that in these challenging times, all federal agencies will be asked to operate with the utmost efficiency. The funds originally proposed for FY2011 appropriations for the Bureau of Prisons included monies to hire 1,200 new staff members in a modest effort to offset the ever-increasing federal inmate population. As new adult offenders continue to pour into the federal prison system, we don't believe that we can operate safely through a prolonged continuing resolution without the funding for additional staff. If the Bureau of Prisons is unable to secure the funding needed to hire and train a sufficient number of correctional workers, it will become increasingly difficult to properly supervise the offenders in our custody.

As a member of Congress, we recognize that you are in a position to help us with these issues. On behalf of the employees at our facility, I respectfully ask that you assist us in whichever way you can to secure a reasonable and prudent level of funding for the 2011 fiscal year without further delay or, even worse, a government shutdown. Considering the current state of the Bureau of Prisons, we can't realistically continue to operate safely without your help. I honestly do not believe that our agency can accomplish our mission continuing to operate at 2010 appropriated funding levels. A further prolonged continuing resolution would make it increasingly impossible for us to do so.

If you have any questions, you may contact me in the following ways:

Union Office Phone: #
Union Office FAX: #
Cell Phone: #
Work E-mail: [Your BOP Email](#)
Home e-mail: [Your Union Email](#)

Thank you for your assistance in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Your Name
President, AFGC Local #
Facility Type
Town, State
Council of Prison Locals