

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
INTELLIGENCE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

April 9, 2018

Mark S. Inch
Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First St, NW
Washington, DC 20534

Dear Director Inch:

This letter is to follow up on my previous correspondence dated March 13, 2018 concerning staffing levels within the Bureau of Prisons (BOP). While I appreciate the quick response to my inquiry, I remain concerned about your assumption that the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY2018) would call for the elimination of additional positions within BOP. With my support, Congress provided BOP with \$7.114 billion in funding for salaries and expenses for FY2018 – about \$29 million more than was requested by the President's budget and an increase of about \$106 million from Fiscal Year 2017 – and explicit direction to hire more full-time correctional staff.

The Senate report language directed the BOP to "...curtail its overreliance on augmentation and instead hire additional full-time correctional staff before continuing to augment existing staff. BOP is further directed to submit quarterly reports to the Committee on the inmate-to-correctional officer ratios at each facility." As such, I am requesting detailed information about BOP's plan to use the additional money provided for FY2018 to hire additional staff in order to fulfill the explicit Congressional mandate referenced above and decrease the use of augmentation.

I share your belief that the safety of staff, inmates, and the public is the highest priority for BOP. As such, I wanted to make you aware of an incident that occurred at the high security U.S. Penitentiary at FCC Hazelton on April 2, 2018. Two inmates began fighting with prison-made weapons in one of the housing units, resulting in one inmate being mortally wounded and pronounced dead shortly thereafter. According to correctional officers at the facility, there is an epidemic of drugs and weapons proliferating throughout the facility. Staff are consistently seizing these contraband items – sometimes as often as several times per day. However, due to the persistent staffing shortages, they do not feel that they have the resources they need to search the inmates as often or be as thorough as they need to be to prevent another deadly incident like this from happening again. At the time this incident occurred, there were two officers responsible for supervising about 115 inmates or more than 50 inmates for each assigned officer. That is unacceptable.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science, it is my responsibility to conduct oversight of our federal agencies and provide them with the

resources they need to execute their responsibilities. During the FY2018 appropriations process, I was proud to fight for and secure additional resources to address these staffing shortages, and I will continue this fight throughout the FY2019 process.

West Virginia houses almost 10,000 inmates in federal correctional facilities across the state. We have a responsibility to support and protect the brave men and women who serve as correctional officers in these facilities and do everything in our power to ensure that they can return home safely every day. I look forward to reviewing your plan to address the staff shortages with the additional funding provided in the FY2018 omnibus and continuing our work together on behalf of our federal correctional officers and the communities they serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Joe Manchin, III
United States Senator