

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April, 17 2013

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
H-309 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Fattah:

As you begin to craft the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2014, we urge you to include the Department of Justice's requested funding for the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Buildings and Facilities and Salaries and Expenses accounts without unnecessary restrictions to provide for the activations of new prisons. This funding will allow the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to keep pace with the increased number of inmates and severe overcrowding at maximum security facilities.

Currently, the Bureau confines over 176,000 inmates in Bureau-operated facilities that have a total rated capacity of 128,731 (the remaining almost 42,000 are housed in contract facilities -- primarily of privately operated prisons). Crowding is of special concern at high security facilities including penitentiaries (operating at 59 percent over capacity). Crowding is a very real danger in prisons and leads to safety concerns.

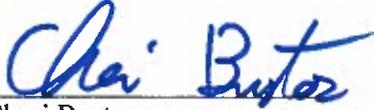
Prison crowding also strains facilities' infrastructure like water, sewage, and power systems, sometimes to the breaking point. Inmate frustration and anger, in turn, are catalysts for violence which poses real risks to the lives of staff and inmates. Inmates in the highest security facilities that confine a disproportionate number of inmates who are prone to violence against other inmates and authority. The risks to staff and inmates can be mitigated by providing more bed space for the highest threat inmates in need of maximum security and supervision. Activating new prisons will reduce crowding in high security facilities from 59 percent by 43 percent by the end of FY 2015.

We appreciate the difficulty you face in appropriating adequate resources for the programs under your jurisdiction. Support for adequate secure, controlled detention and prison facilities is vital to ensuring sentenced criminals are removed from society and housed in prisons and community based facilities that are safe, humane, cost efficient, and appropriately secure.

We respectfully request that you include the Department of Justice's requested funding for the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Buildings and Facilities and Salaries and Expenses accounts without unnecessary restrictions provide for the activations of new prisons for the BOP in the FY2014 CJS appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheri Bustos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Loebsack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress