



FAITH & FREEDOM COALITION

April 10th, 2024

The Honorable James Comer
Chair, House Oversight Committee
2410 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Comer,

As conservative grassroots organizations, the Conservative Political Action Coalition (CPAC) and the Faith and Freedom Coalition support efforts to promote public safety through government accountability and the recognition of human dignity. With this in mind, we write today to urge you to support and advance the Federal Prison Oversight Act (FPOA) ([H.R. 3019](#)). This commonsense legislation to improve the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) aligns with our core values of ensuring government accountability and improving public safety by increasing transparency in our federal prison system and preventing harm to both those working and living in these facilities.

America's prison system is in crisis. According to a report from the DOJ Inspector General's Office, federal corrections officers and those they oversee are at constant risk of serious injury in facilities that are overcrowded, understaffed, underfunded, and therefore unsafe. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is responsible for the care of over 150,000 people but its mismanagement and lack of transparency has endangered those under its supervision as well BOP's 34,000 employees—making it harder and more dangerous for them to do their jobs of ensuring an orderly and safe federal prison system.

The BOP is a necessary and important institution with a critical mandate. With an annual budget of over \$8 billion, it would be a disservice to the American taxpayer for it to remain without oversight and accountability. Federal prisons should be a safe place for the corrections officers who operate it so that they can ensure the wellbeing of those who reside in their facilities with the purpose to reduce recidivism and advance public safety.

BOP's well-documented history demonstrates that an independent oversight agency is key to improving safety and accountability outcomes in the federal prison system. H.R.3019 does so in

two main ways: first, the BOP would be subject to independent oversight by the Department of Justice's Office of Inspector General (IG), and second, individual complaints would be investigated by an independent Ombudsman.

H.R. 3019 is a powerful tool that benefits correctional staff, incarcerated individuals, and communities across the country. It will also improve and facilitate Congress' oversight role by providing Members with the insights of an oversight body that conducts routine inspections, investigates systemic issues, collects and analyzes data, and reports its findings. You and your colleagues will have the information to make more informed policy and appropriations decisions that help correctional staff focus on fostering a safe environment behind bars that keeps them out of danger and will improve the likelihood of success when incarcerated individuals return to society.

We thank you for your consideration and markup of the Federal Prison Oversight Act and urge the committee to advance this urgently needed legislation.