

GOOD MORNING CHAIRMAN NADLER, RANKING MEMBER JORDAN, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. IT IS A PLEASURE SPEAKING WITH YOU ALL TODAY ABOUT AN IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR THE PEOPLE OF PENNSYLVANIA'S 12TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT AND CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS ACROSS THE NATION: REFORMING THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS.

THE BOP FACES MANY CHALLENGES, SOME THAT EXISTED PRIOR TO COVID-19 AND OTHERS THAT WERE UNDERSCORED AND MADE WORSE BY THE PANDEMIC.

THAT IS WHY MY OFFICE FORMED THE BOP CAUCUS: A BIPARTISAN, BICAMERAL GROUP WHOSE MISSION IS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF OUR FEDERAL PRISONS AND IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS FOR CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS, INMATES, AND THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THESE FACILITIES ARE LOCATED.

A RECENT GAO REPORT FOUND THAT BOP DID NOT CAPTURE OR SHARE, BUREAU-WIDE, THE LESSONS AND PRACTICES DISCUSSED AT ITS TELECONFERENCES OR HAVE AN APPROACH FOR ENSURING FACILITIES APPLY THESE LESSONS IN THE AFTERMATH OF COVID-19. IT IS CRITICAL THAT CONGRESS

WORKS TO BRING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY WITHIN THE BOP-AND
HOLDS BOP LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR DECISIONS.

ADDITIONALLY, CONGRESS MUST ENACT REFORM THAT IMPROVES THE
CONDITIONS INSIDE OF THEIR PRISONS. THE BOP'S SECURITY AND RADIO
SYSTEMS REMAIN OBSOLETE, LEADING TO AN INFLUX IN CONTRABAND AND
VIOLENCE.

IN 2016, THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
PUBLISHED A REPORT IDENTIFYING MAJOR DEFICIENCIES AND NEEDED
UPGRADES WITHIN THE BOP'S SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEM, INCLUDING BLIND
SPOTS AND BROKEN CAMERAS. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE. THAT IS WHY TODAY, I
EXPRESS MY SUPPORT FOR THE PRISON CAMERA REFORM ACT OF 2021.
SENATOR OSSOFF IS LEADING THIS EFFORT IN THE SENATE, AND I LOOK
FORWARD TO WORKING ON SIMILAR LEGISLATION IN THE HOUSE.

LASTLY, BOP'S STAFFING LEVELS CONTINUE TO PLUMMET WHILE HIRING FREEZES
ARE OCCURRING NATIONWIDE. BOP REFORM CAUCUS MEMBERS, BOTH
DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS, WORKED TO INCLUDE APPROPRIATIONS

LANGUAGE TO INCREASE STAFFING LEVELS. DESPITE LANGUAGE FROM THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE TO PLUS UP STAFFING LEVELS, THE BOP HAS REMAINED UNDERSTAFFED AND HAS RELIED ON AUGMENTATION AND REASSIGNMENT TO MAKE UP FOR ITS SHORTFALLS.

THESE METHODS ONLY ADD TO THE BURDENS PLACED ON OUR CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS, THE INMATES THEY SECURE, AND THEIR SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES. IT IS STILL UNKNOWN HOW EXCESSIVE OVERTIME HOURS AND DANGEROUS CONDITIONS FOR INMATES CONTRIBUTE TO OFFICER FATIGUE.

WHAT IS CLEAR FROM EACH OF THESE EFFORTS IS THE FACT THAT WE ARE HERE TO WORK ON THESE CHALLENGES TOGETHER.

I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING TO WORK ON IMPORTANT ISSUES SUCH AS INCREASING BOP STAFFING LEVELS AND IMPROVING BENEFITS, ENSURING STRONG IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST STEP ACT, AND STREAMLINING THE BOP'S FUTURE RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES.

OUR TEAM IS COMMITTED TO BRINGING REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS TOGETHER TO WORK ON MEANINGFUL, LASTING REFORM. I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH BOP LEADERSHIP AND MY COLLEAGUES IN CONGRESS AS WE STAND UNITED TO IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND OPERATIONS AT THE BOP.