

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

We write today urging you to expeditiously finalize the COVID-19 emergency response package and include critical assistance for the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to respond to the ongoing pandemic. This support is immediately needed to assist with testing, provide personal protective equipment (PPE), and ensure the BOP can prevent the virus from propagating further within our federal prisons.

As you know, the BOP is responsible for over 140,000 inmates in BOP-managed institutions and community-based facilities throughout the nation. Per BOP data, over 9,000 inmates and staff have tested positive for COVID-19. In California, nearly 1,700 inmates and staff have tested positive within Terminal Island Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) and Lompoc Federal Correction Complex (FCC). We are extremely concerned by how quickly the virus spread and the BOP's response to this crisis. It highlights the need for universal testing and sufficient PPE for inmates and staff without any further delay.

The recent report from the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that testing within BOP facilities has been limited. In cases where universal testing was implemented, like within Lompoc FCI, over 75 percent of inmates tested positive. While the BOP has not communicated plans to provide testing for their staff onsite, the OIG report highlights that only 53 of 416 staff members at Lompoc FCC were tested for COVID-19 in May. Of those that were tested, approximately 60 percent tested positive.

This is very troubling as individuals that work in the facility could be exposed to the virus and unknowingly spread it within their communities. As we know from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic individuals are equally capable of transmitting this disease to others as those showing symptoms.

We are concerned that BOP has not yet implemented universal testing or onsite testing for inmates and staff to stop the spread of the virus throughout the prison system or within our communities. We therefore urge you to work swiftly to ensure the necessary funds are made available to better equip the BOP in handling this crisis. The House of Representatives passed the HEROES Act, with \$200 million for the BOP to respond to COVID-19 outbreaks, over 10 weeks ago. Our communities cannot afford further delays.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to contact our office should you have any questions. We stand ready to provide any assistance needed.

Sincerely,



SALUD CARBAJAL
Member of Congress



DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator



KAMALA D. HARRIS
United States Senator