

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 15, 2020

Michael Carvajal
Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First St., NW
Washington, DC 20534

Dear Director Carvajal,

We write to you regarding the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) staff members who were deployed two week ago to protests in Washington, DC and Miami, Florida and to ask whether specific precautions will be taken to mitigate spread of COVID-19 to inmate populations and others as these staff return to work at federal penitentiaries.

On May 1, 2020, the BOP stated that 70% of all inmates tested for COVID-19 in federal prisons were positive.¹ Medical directors at certain facilities have stated that inmate infection most likely comes from BOP staff members.²

On May 21, 2020, Senator Tim Kaine, Senator Mark Warner, Congressman Donald McEachin, and Congressman Morgan Griffith sent you a letter sharing concerns expressed by FCI Petersburg staff about health standards concerns at their facility. Specifically, staff asserted that both inmates and staff are not being provided sufficient amounts of personal protective equipment (PPE), and there are continued inmate transfers between facilities without regard for COVID-19 infection rates.³ Officers from this facility were among those deployed to protests in Washington, DC, and according to reports they did not wear masks or facial coverings.



Federal Corrections Complex (FCC) Petersburg badge on left arm of BOP officer deployed in Washington, DC. (June 3rd, 2020) Image obtained by Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi's congressional staff.

¹ Barr, Luke. ABC News. "70% of inmates tested have COVID-19: Bureau of Prisons." <https://abcnews.go.com/US/70-inmates-tested-covid-19-bureau-prisons/story?id=70454527> (5/1/20)

² Hutchinson, Bill. ABC News. "COVID-19 outbreak infecting over 500 prisoners may have come from staff: Medical director." <https://abcnews.go.com/US/covid-19-outbreak-infecting-500-prisoners-staff-medical/story?id=70382322> (4/28/20)

³ McEachin, Don. "McEachin Fights for Health and Safety of Prison Staff, Inmates During Pandemic." (May 21, 2020) <https://mceachin.house.gov/media/press-releases/mceachin-fights-health-and-safety-prison-staff-inmates-during-pandemic>

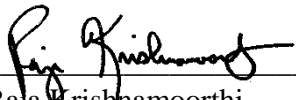
On June 9, 2020, members of DC National Guard who responded to the protests tested positive for COVID-19, according to military representatives, raising concerns about BOP and other personnel who responded to the protests.⁴

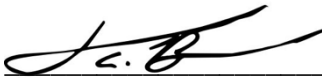
As federal inmates are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and BOP officers appear not to have taken recommended precautions to prevent spread of the virus, please provide the following information:


- 1.) List all federal facilities that BOP staff have or will return to after being deployed in Washington, DC, and Miami, Florida.
- 2.) Share any information available to the BOP about COVID-19 spread among staff and inmates at these facilities.
- 3.) Will all BOP staff deployed to Washington, DC, and Miami, Florida self-quarantine for a 14-day incubation period?
- 4.) Will all BOP staff deployed to Washington, DC, and Miami, Florida receive diagnostic testing for COVID-19 infection?
- 5.) In the affirmative, state whether all BOP staff deployed to Washington, DC, and Miami, Florida received diagnostic testing for active COVID-19 infection before travelling to these two cities.
- 6.) Will precautions be taken to protect individuals at facilities with returning BOP staff from COVID-19? If so, what?

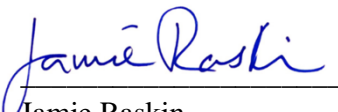
We request answers to the above questions by June 17th, 2020, and an update on the COVID-19 positivity rates among these BOP staff two weeks later, on July 1, 2020.

Sincerely,


Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress


Cory Booker
United States Senator


Bennie Thompson
Member of Congress


Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

⁴ Bowden, John. The Hill. "DC National Guard members called to respond to protests test positive for COVID-19." <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/501863-dc-national-guard-called-to-respond-to-dc-protests-test-positive-for-covid-19> (6/9/20)