

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2022

Director Michael Carvajal
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20534

Dear Director Carvajal,

Federal Correctional Complex (FCC) Oakdale is a federal prison complex located in rural Louisiana. FCC Oakdale includes two low-security facilities and a minimum-security satellite camp, totaling approximately 2,000 federal inmates. FCC Oakdale employees perform the important work of correctional officers, counselors, teachers, medical staff, and more. The actions of both correctional service and non-correctional service employees are crucial to the safe and orderly operation of a federal prison complex such as FCC Oakdale.

Regrettably, FCC Oakdale faces unsustainably low staffing levels that is nearing crisis. There are approximately 116 staff vacancies at FCC Oakdale, including 65 vacancies for correctional services staff. These vacancies force FCC Oakdale to rely on mandatory overtime in order to meet the basic safety needs of its mission. FCC Oakdale also engages in augmentation— instructing staff to perform the duties and responsibilities of a position for which they were not hired to do. This practice often results in non-custodial staff, such as teachers, counselors, and administrators, performing the duties of a correctional officer or other custodial service staff.

The use of mandatory overtime and augmentation as a solution to chronic staffing shortages is a dangerous practice. These practices lead to exhaustion, fatigue, and apprehension among FCC Oakdale employees. Sadly, these solutions are increasingly becoming the norm at FCC Oakdale and elsewhere.

Staffing conditions at FCC Oakdale have understandably forced many veteran staff members to actively seek opportunities for promotion or transfer to other federal prison facilities and agencies, or even retire, if eligible. FCC Oakdale's depleted staffing numbers and continued reliance on mandatory overtime and augmentation will encourage staff to retire, resign, and seek other employment. Without correction, staffing shortages and safety concerns at FCC Oakdale will only grow more severe.

As concerned members of the Louisiana Delegation, we write to inquire about actions the Bureau of Prisons plans to take in order to maintain adequate staffing levels at the FCC Oakdale facility. We ask that you consider using existing authorities, such as the ability to provide retention bonuses, that will keep staff onboard and allow FCC Oakdale to attract additional personnel needed

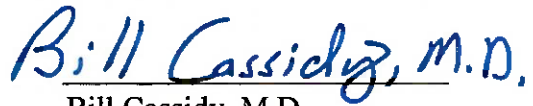
to perform critical staffing functions. The incentive to retain and hire additional employees will reduce FCC Oakdale's reliance on mandatory overtime and ease augmentation practices, which frustrate FCC Oakdale's ability to meet its legally mandated programming requirements under the First Step Act of 2018 and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020. We respectfully ask that you respond to this inquiry detailing actions the Bureau will take to address this very serious issue.

We remain ready to work together to improve employee retention and safety at FCC Oakdale. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



John Kennedy
United States Senator



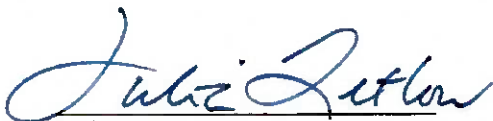
Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Steve Scalise
United States Representative



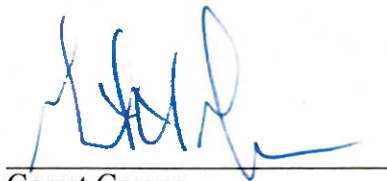
Mike Johnson
United States Representative



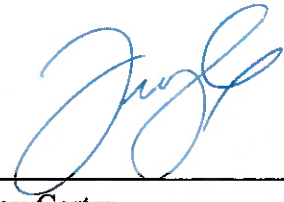
Julia Letlow
United States Representative



Clay Higgins
United States Representative



Garret Graves
United States Representative



Troy Carter
United States Representative

CC: The Honorable Heriberto Tellez
Regional Director, South Central Region
RO South Central
Regional Office
US Armed Forces Reserve Complex
344 Marine Forces Drive
Grand Prairie, TX 75051

The Honorable Lisa O. Monaco
Deputy Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530