



April 11, 2025

Chairman Hal Rogers  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Grace Meng  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman Jerry Moran  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Chris Van Hollen  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Re: Congress Must Fund the Federal Prison Oversight Act (FPOA) in FY2026 Appropriations**

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Meng, Chairman Moran, and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

**The undersigned national, state, and local public health, criminal justice reform, and civil rights organizations write today to urge you to support the funding of the Federal Prison Oversight Act.**

The passage of the bipartisan Federal Prison Oversight Act (FPOA) marked a major milestone in the push for accountability and transparency within the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). This critical legislation provides a long-overdue framework for addressing systemic issues in federal correctional facilities through comprehensive independent oversight, but its success depends on Congress ensuring it is fully funded in the FY2026 appropriations bill.

The BOP oversees more than 150,000 incarcerated individuals and employs tens of thousands of staff, with an annual budget exceeding \$8 billion. Yet, until now, the BOP has operated with limited independent oversight, leading to serious and well-documented consequences for correctional staff, incarcerated individuals, and their families. The FPOA provides solutions to these challenges by:

- Empowering the Department of Justice's Office of Inspector General (OIG) to conduct **independent, risk-based inspections** of all 122 federal correctional facilities. Facilities with higher risk scores will undergo more frequent inspections.
- Establishing a **Correctional Ombudsman position**, responsible for investigating complaints from incarcerated individuals and their representatives, family members, BOP staff and their representatives, Members of Congress, and the judiciary.
- Creating a **secure hotline and online form** for the submission of complaints, ensuring accessibility and transparency.



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We ask that the CJS Appropriations for FY2026 include up to \$40 million to enact and sustain the Federal Prison Oversight Act. This funding equates to just 0.5 percent of the BOP budget and is crucial for:

- Supporting the Correctional Ombudsman and ensuring their independence.
- Conducting comprehensive, risk-based inspections to improve safety, accountability, and facility conditions.
- Establishing systems for transparent complaint processing and timely resolution.

The near-unanimous bipartisan support for the FPOA reflects a shared recognition that comprehensive oversight is necessary to address the BOP's systemic challenges. However, without adequate funding, the transformative potential of this legislation cannot be realized.

We urge Congress to:

- **Prioritize dedicated funding for the FPOA in FY2026 appropriations** to ensure its timely implementation.
- **Reaffirm bipartisan support for this critical initiative**, demonstrating a continued commitment to accountability, transparency, and public safety.

The FPOA is not just about improving conditions within federal prisons—it is about honoring our shared values of justice, transparency, and efficient governance. Adequate funding will allow us to build a correctional system that is safer, more accountable, and better aligned with our nation's principles. Furthermore, independent oversight can prevent abuse, reduce recidivism, and ensure taxpayer dollars are used responsibly. While this is good fiscal policy, without funding, FPOA mandates cannot be effectively implemented.

We stand ready to provide additional information and support as Congress works to secure the funding necessary to make the FPOA a success.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations:**

National Participatory Defense HUB  
Dream.org  
Fair and Just Prosecution  
Americans for Prosperity  
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)  
Just Detention International  
National District Attorneys Association (NDAA)  
JustLeadershipUSA  
National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE)  
Due Process Institute

**State Organizations:**

Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice  
Florida Cares Charity  
John Howard Association  
UCLA Behind Bars Data Project  
Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition  
Accountability Associates  
The Humanization Project  
Loyola Law School-Los Angeles, CA  
Pennsylvania Prison Society

**Individuals:**

Christin Johnson- Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission  
Martin Horn-State of Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections (retired).  
Terry Schuster-New Jersey Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson



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