

United States Senate

December 14, 2021

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

Director Carvajal,

On July 15, 2021, I wrote you because I had not received answers to my Questions for the Record (QFRs) after the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee oversight hearing of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in April. I asked you when the BOP would restore Federal Corrections Complex (FCC) Pollock and FCC Oakdale staffing numbers to their January 2016 levels, as Congress has directed. In order to meet custody requirements in the wake of staffing shortages, these facilities have been forced to pay increased overtime and to increase the number of guards by siphoning personnel from other departments.

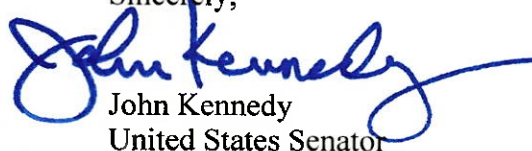
As of the date of this letter, I have not received a response from you. In other words, QFRs have remained unanswered for *eight months*. This is unacceptable. My staff followed up in September with the Department of Justice's Office of Legislative Affairs and were told that you would share answers with the Judiciary Committee "as soon as possible."

Federal agencies must respond to congressional inquiries in a timely way. As a result of your failure to respond, the staffing crisis at FCC Oakdale has actually gone from bad to worse since the Judiciary Committee held the BOP oversight hearing earlier this year. In fact, I have learned that BOP headquarters in Washington, D.C. has ordered FCC Oakdale to reduce existing staff levels to 93 percent of current levels. If this occurs, the facility will have approximately 120 fewer personnel than it did in 2016, which is the level Congress has funded and required the facility to maintain. Further, FCC Oakdale is facing an additional crisis: It has lost a number of critical personnel because of President Biden's vaccine mandate for federal employees.

Our men and women in law enforcement, including those working some of the most dangerous jobs in our federal prisons, must have every resource available to them to ensure their safety. Sufficient staffing levels are crucial to that safety. To that end, I ask that you respond to this letter by December 31, 2021, with the date that the BOP will restore FCC Oakdale to its 2016 staffing levels, per the direction of Congress.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,


John Kennedy
United States Senator