

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2023

Colette S. Peters
Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 1st St, NW
Washington, DC 20534

Dear Director Peters,

This letter serves as a follow up to issues raised in a letter that I wrote to the Federal Bureau of Prisons on January 10, 2023. The workforce at the Federal Correctional Complex (FCC) in Florence, Colorado continues to be overworked and understaffed. Action from the Federal Bureau of Prisons has been much too slow to support the Officers. On Friday, April 14, I visited the FCC officers to see the issues that they are experiencing first-hand.

AFGE 1169, the local union representing the prison workforce, has asked for additional direct-hire authority positions. It is my understanding the Office of Personnel Management's previous allotment of 62 direct hire positions have been exhausted. Employees continue to struggle with forced overtime leading to dangerous conditions at the nation's only supermax facility. It seems imperative to request additional direct-hire authority positions to ease these conditions.

It has been 18 months since AFGE 1169 has brought the serious understaffing and safety concerns to light. In the past 12 months, over 160 new staff have been hired. However, FCC Florence has retained less than 25 staff members in that time according to your staffing reports. These reports show an increase in Correctional Officers, but a decline in case managers, counselors, nurses, and other essential non-correctional staff.

FCC Florence has proven, with direct-hire authority, the ability to bring on staff. The renewal of this authority, combined with the 25% retention would allow the complex to continue to hire at expedited rates, while maintaining staff in crucial non-correctional positions. These efforts would support a safe custodial environment, along with the provision of quality programs and services.

Once again, you testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on September 29, 2022, that a "key priority for the Bureau" was maintaining "fully staffed institutions." We need to ensure that we are properly supporting the workforce at the FCC Florence, this includes direct hire authority and 25% retention for all staff to prevent the ongoing attrition we are seeing.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this request in accordance with all applicable rules, regulations, laws, and guidelines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brittany Pettersen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B' and a long, sweeping tail.

Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress