

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 11, 2025

The Honorable William K. Marshall, III  
Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons  
320 First St, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20534

Dear Director Marshall:

We write to you with concern regarding the impact that record heat waves will have on staff and people who are incarcerated across the 122 Federal Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) facilities and request information that may guide Congressional action to better assist efforts to improve the state of facilities.

Over the past few years, temperatures across the country have increased, resulting in record heat waves. Just this past month, hundreds of cities throughout the U.S. reached all-time daily high temperature records, with some temperatures soaring as high as 117 degrees. A similar record-breaking heat wave left ten people dead in Texas in 2011. While no national statistics are available on heat-related deaths or illnesses in prisons, a 2022 study reports that approximately 13 percent of deaths in Texas prisons between 2001 and 2019 may be attributed to extreme heat days, with an average of 14 inmate deaths per year in facilities without air conditioning.<sup>1</sup>

Given these findings, we have significant concern about the impact of increased temperatures on people who work and are incarcerated in our federal prison facilities. Several reports, including one conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, emphasize the ongoing crisis BOP facilities face due to severe staffing shortages and deteriorating infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> Aging infrastructure poses significant risks to facilities lacking proper air-conditioning systems, which are critically important in preventing serious health issues associated with extreme heat. Staffing shortages limit staff capacity to mitigate extreme heat issues, making those with medical and mental health conditions that are exacerbated by high temperatures more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses or deaths.

It is vital that safe temperature control measures and effective cooling systems are implemented to prevent incidents of heat-related illnesses or deaths. In Congress, we hope to use the information and feedback you provide to work collaboratively in addressing these urgent issues and ensuring that people are living and working in humane and safe conditions.

With these concerns in mind, we respectfully request your thorough responses to the following requests by September 10, 2025.

1. According to the BOP's Facilities Operations Manual,<sup>3</sup> temperature set points in facilities are targeted at 76 degrees Fahrenheit in the cooling season and 68 degrees Fahrenheit in the heating season. It also

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36322085/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://oig.justice.gov/tmpe/challenge-1>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/4200\\_12\\_CN-2.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/4200_12_CN-2.pdf)

states that due to issues such as the age of HVAC systems, occupants may experience a range of temperatures outside of these set points.

- a. Please specify the range of temperature points outside of the targeted set points that the BOP finds acceptable for all facilities staff and occupants to experience.
  - b. How frequently are temperatures checked daily in all spaces that staff and people who are incarcerated occupy?
  - c. Are there temperature reading devices installed in all buildings and units that staff and people who are incarcerated occupy, including in cells?
  - d. Which facility staff member/position oversees compliance with temperature control standards in facilities?
2. If a facility is found to be in violation of guidelines within the operations manual, what is the established protocol to ensure that the facility becomes compliant in a timely manner?
3. As of July 2025, do all 122 BOP facilities have functioning air conditioning systems in all buildings and units that are occupied by staff and people who are incarcerated? Functioning is defined as effectively cooling and dehumidifying indoor air to maintain a temperature between 68- and 76-degrees Fahrenheit, per BOP standards, within a designated space.
  - a. Please provide a list of all facilities without system-wide functioning air conditioning systems.
4. For facilities that do not have a fully functioning air conditioning system or have aging infrastructure such as outdated and faulty electrical systems that routinely lead to power outages in the summer:
  - a. What current and short-term steps are the BOP taking to promptly improve infrastructure at these facilities?
  - b. How frequently are facility systems being inspected by certified technicians?
5. A May 2023 audit from the Office of the Inspector General<sup>4</sup> provided recommendations for the maintenance and construction of critical facility infrastructure such as HVAC systems, including outlining major barriers. What progress has been made to implement the recommendations?
6. For facilities without a fully functioning air conditioning system, or those that have been identified with severely aging systems, what are the BOP's short-term protocols to mitigate the risk of heat-illness for the protection of staff and people who are incarcerated?
7. Are heat mitigation options such as designated cool areas, access to cold water, and cooling towels available to staff to protect them from instances of extreme heat in facilities without a fully operational air conditioning system on any given day or once internal temperature reaches what is considered dangerous?
  - a. If any of these options are provided, please also indicate how frequently they are provided.
8. Are heat mitigation options such as cold-water bottles, cooling fans, and cooling towels available to people who are incarcerated - outside of prison commissary - in facilities without a fully operational air conditioning system on any given day or once internal temperature reaches what is considered dangerous?
  - a. If any of these options are provided, please also indicate how frequently they are provided.
9. Are people who work in and reside in special housing units (SHUs) also accounted for in the equitable distribution of temperature control during the cooling season?

<sup>44</sup> [https://oig.justice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/23-064\\_1.pdf](https://oig.justice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/23-064_1.pdf)

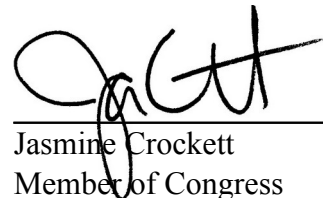
- a. Are these individuals also provided with any heat mitigated options such as cold-water bottles, cooling fans, and cooling towels?
10. In the BOP's Clinical Guidance on the Prevention and Management of Heat-Related Illness (2017), it is indicated that all staff and people who are incarcerated should be educated seasonally about risk factors for and recognition of HRI, preventive strategies to reduce heat stress, and appropriate interventions.
  - a. Please specify how the BOP monitors whether these trainings are administrated in each facility.
  - b. Is there a log of completion for staff and people who are incarcerated to indicate when they've completed the respective training?
11. According to health records and other reporting mechanisms available at each facility, how many heat-related health incidents (illnesses, strokes, and deaths) have occurred since Jan. 1, 2022, amongst both staff and people who are incarcerated in each facility?
12. Please share the number of complaints that the BOP has received from staff and people who are incarcerated related to extreme heat in facilities since Jan. 1, 2022.
  - a. What is the established protocol that the BOP takes to remedy complaints related to extreme heat temperatures?
13. Please feel free to share any other relevant information that would be helpful to know, including other ways which Congress can potentially support resolving this issue in a more comprehensive way.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you on this matter.

Sincerely,



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress



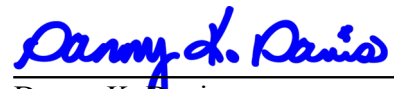
Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



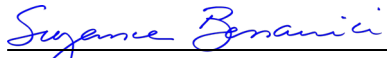
Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress



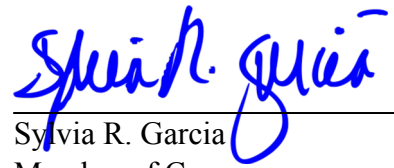
André Carson  
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



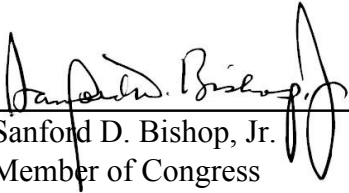
Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



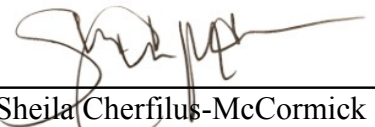
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



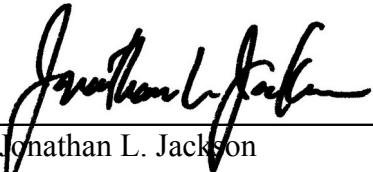
Rashida Tlaib  
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



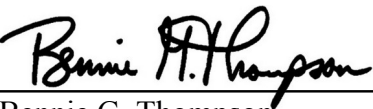
Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II  
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Valerie P. Foushee  
Member of Congress



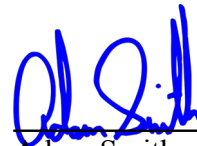
Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



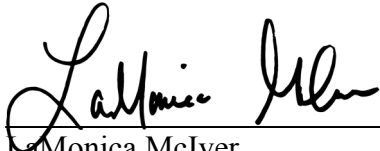
Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



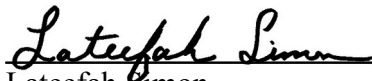
Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



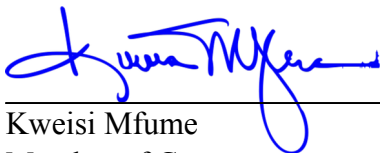
Al Green  
Member of Congress



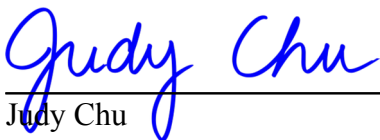
Lateefah Simon  
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Dwight Evans  
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Kweisi Mfume  
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Judy Chu  
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Andrea Salinas  
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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Dina Titus  
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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
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Shri Thanedar  
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Mark DeSaulnier  
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MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress

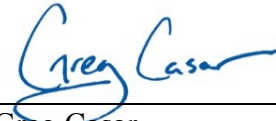


Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Summer L. Lee  
Member of Congress



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Greg Casar  
Member of Congress



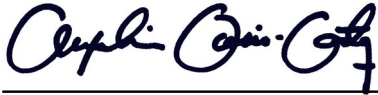
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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



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Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress



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Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress