

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1317

3 April, 2013

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am requesting that you prioritize the activation of Illinois' Thomson Correctional Center in your FY14 budget proposal. According to the Bureau of Prisons (BoP), \$168 million is needed to begin the process of activating and staffing this long-delayed facility that the Department of Justice purchased from the State of Illinois in October 2012 to address the chronic overcrowding of our federal prison system.

Higher security prison facilities, including penitentiaries, are currently operating at 54 percent over capacity and medium-security institutions are 44 percent over capacity. This critical problem puts the security staff and inmates alike at risk. The Thomson Correctional Center can immediately alleviate some of this overcrowding with high-security bed space that would accommodate 2,600 high-security inmates, in addition to 200 minimum security inmates.

Overcrowding also strains the infrastructure of BoP facilities, including water, sewage, and power systems. The frustration and anger from a lack of resources is a precursor to inmate violence, which poses additional risk to prison staff and other inmates.

Thomson prison, when fully activated, would also add 1,100 jobs in our region and is expected to generate more than \$122 million in local expenditures, \$19 million in labor income, and \$61 million in sales at local small businesses. The prison's activation would not only be good for our economy, it would generate a sense of pride amongst the surrounding communities to see the dormant facility, that to this point has been a constant reminder of broken promises, finally be put to good use.

On behalf of the prison staff who risk their lives daily in crowded prisons throughout the country, as well as my constituents in Illinois' 17th Congressional District, thank you in advance for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress