

## **Transcript: "A Message from IG Horowitz: The BOP's Untimely Releases of Inmates From Federal Prisons" May 2016**

Hello. I'm Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today our office issued a report about inmates who were released from federal prison on the wrong date by the Department's Bureau of Prisons.

Our review found that of the approximately 462,000 federal inmates released between 2009 and 2014, 157 were released either too early or too late for reasons the Bureau of Prisons said were the result of staff error.

Although these cases were rare and the overall error rate was low, several of these errors led to egregious results.

For example, we found one case where an inmate was released nearly three years too late. Two other inmates were incarcerated more than a year longer than they should have been. Another 58 stayed at least a month past when their sentence should have ended.

Being released from prison late is unjust and raises serious civil liberties concerns. Early releases, meanwhile, can put communities at risk.

In addition to the civil liberties impact, we estimate it cost taxpayers more than \$660,000 to incarcerate the 152 prisoners who should have been released earlier. The BOP spent another \$680,000 to settle four lawsuits brought by the affected inmates.

Our review found that most of these errors were related to mistakes calculating credit for jail time and time served in state prisons. In other cases they were due to inaccurate or confusing information provided by state officials or the courts.

The cases that BOP attributed to errors by its staff were the focus of this review. But another significant finding was that the BOP classified about 4,100 releases between 2009 and 2014 as untimely, for reasons other than errors by its own staff.

According to the BOP, the vast majority of these were due to circumstances beyond its control, such as a judge shortening a sentence to less time than an inmate had already served. However, we found that neither the Department nor the BOP has attempted to work with the other agencies to examine these cases, and they don't appear to fully understand all of the actions that can contribute to untimely releases.

As such, the Department doesn't currently know whether similar untimely releases could be prevented in the future. In our report, we make seven recommendations to help the Justice Department and the BOP review the causes of this problem and identify solutions. To learn more, please visit our website: [oig.justice.gov](http://oig.justice.gov) where you can read the full report.

Thank you for joining us.