



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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DOJ OIG Releases Report on the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Management of Its Female Inmate Population

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report assessing the Federal Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) management of its female inmate population. The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) examined BOP's efforts and capacity to ensure that BOP-wide policies, programs, and decisions adequately address the distinctive needs of female inmates. The OIG concluded that BOP has not been strategic in its management of female inmates, and BOP's programming and policies may not fully consider their needs.

As described in today's report, the OIG's specific findings include:

- **Lack of a Strategic Approach.** We found that BOP could not ensure that its correctional institutions adhered to BOP policies pertaining to female inmates because BOP has only recently taken steps to formalize a process for verifying compliance with those policies. Further, while BOP established a Central Office branch that serves as its source of expertise on the management of female inmates, this branch may not have adequate staffing to fully fulfill its mission. Additionally, BOP requires all staff in female institutions to take training on the management of female inmates and trauma-informed correctional care; however, BOP does not require its National Executive Staff to complete these trainings. As a result, the officials who develop policy and make decisions that affect female inmates may not be aware of their needs.
- **BOP Programming and Policies.** We identified three areas in which BOP's programming and policy decisions did not fully consider the needs of female inmates: (1) trauma treatment programming, (2) pregnancy programming, and (3) feminine hygiene. We found that BOP may not be able to provide its trauma treatment program to all eligible female inmates until late in their incarceration, if at all, because BOP has assigned only one staff member at each institution to offer this program. We also estimated that only 37 percent of sentenced pregnant inmates participated in BOP's pregnancy programs between fiscal year (FY) 2012 and FY 2016. We believe that participation was low because BOP inmates and staff lacked awareness of these programs, and staff may apply eligibility criteria more restrictively than intended by BOP headquarters. Further, we found that the distribution methods for feminine hygiene products provided to inmates varied by institution and did not always ensure that inmates had access to a sufficient quantity of products to meet their needs.
- **Lack of Gender-Specific Posts.** We found that BOP's practice of assigning Correctional Officers to posts solely by seniority has resulted in an inefficient use of Correctional Officer resources at

female institutions. Male Correctional Officers are assigned to posts at which staff must regularly conduct searches of female inmates. Because the *Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003* and BOP policy prohibit male Correctional Officers from searching female inmates, female Correctional Officers must leave other assigned posts to conduct these searches.

- **Negative Impact of Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) Danbury Conversion.** We examined BOP's 2013 decision to convert FCI Danbury from a female institution to a male institution, which resulted in 366 low security sentenced female inmates serving a portion of their sentences in Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) Brooklyn—a detention center intended for short-term confinement. We found that at MDC Brooklyn, BOP offered female inmates no access to outdoor space, less natural light, and fewer programming opportunities than what would otherwise be available to them at BOP facilities designed for long-term confinement.

Today's report makes 10 recommendations to assist BOP in exploring options to improve the management of its female inmate population. BOP agreed with all 10 of our recommendations.

Report: Today's report is available on the OIG's website under "Recent Reports" and at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2018/e1805.pdf>.

Video: To accompany today's report, the OIG has released a 3-minute video featuring the Inspector General discussing the report's findings. The video and a downloadable transcript are available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/multimedia/video-09-18-18.htm>.

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