

Video Transcript: “A Message from the Inspector General: Review of the Federal Bureau of Prisons’ Management of Its Female Inmate Population,” September 2018

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

Today our office released a report on the Federal Bureau of Prisons’, or BOP’s, management of its female inmates. BOP has implemented gender-responsive policies and programs that affect female inmates’ conditions of confinement. We examined these efforts and identified several areas needing improvement, both at the Headquarters level and at BOP’s prisons.

At the Headquarters level, we found that BOP has not ensured that its decision makers are trained about how female inmates’ needs differ from those of male inmates. And BOP may not have adequate staff in their Women and Special Populations Branch. We also found that, until recently, BOP didn’t have a formal process to verify its prisons’ compliance with BOP policies for managing female inmates.

We also identified three main areas of concern at the BOP’s prisons.

- First, we found that low staffing limits BOP’s ability to provide all eligible female inmates with trauma treatment, even though a study relied upon by BOP shows that approximately 90 percent of female inmates are affected by sexual, physical, or emotional trauma at some point in their lives.
- Second, we found that only 37 percent of sentenced pregnant inmates participated in BOP’s pregnancy programs.
- Third, not all prisons ensured that female inmates had sufficient access to feminine hygiene products.

Our report also discusses several additional findings related to female inmate searches; and the negative impact on female inmates when BOP initially converted its Danbury facility from an all-female prison into a prison that also houses male inmates.

Overall, we concluded that BOP has not managed female inmates strategically. For BOP to be fully effective at managing its female inmate population, we believe that it must take a holistic approach at the Central Office level to identify and address the issues affecting this population.

All of our findings are described in detail in our report. To read the report, please visit our website oig.justice.gov, or go to Oversight.gov. Thank you for joining us.

(Stock media provided by composer William Pearson and publisher Prolific Two Publishing / Pond5.com, www.pond5.com. Photos used with permission from BOP.gov. Video footage used with permission from Washington State Department of Corrections <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWmfrpd-ohs>.)