



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 10, 2024

**Statement by DOJ IG Michael E. Horowitz on the Senate Passing the “Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act”**

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael Horowitz applauded the U.S. Senate for its unanimous approval on September 25 of the “Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act.” The Act, introduced by Senators Jon Ossoff and Chuck Grassley, and co-sponsored by Senators Cory Booker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, and Ted Cruz, makes introducing cell phones into federal prisons a felony.

This legislation honors the memory of Lt. Osvaldo Albarati, a Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Correctional Officer, who was murdered in 2013 for his relentless efforts to stop the flow of contraband, including cell phones, into the Metropolitan Detention Center, Guaynabo, in Puerto Rico (MDC Guaynabo). As a result of the continuous seizures made by Lt. Albarati, a group of inmates plotted to have Lt. Albarati murdered and used a contraband cell phone to coordinate the timing and execution of Lt. Albarati’s murder.

Inspector General Michael Horowitz stated: “A cell phone in a prison is a deadly weapon. Yet, as our investigative work continues to demonstrate, contraband cell phones have proven to be pervasive inside many federal prisons—a reality that undermines the safety and security of these institutions for BOP staff, inmates, and the public.

“Lieutenant Albarati was a true hero, selflessly dedicated to making his community and MDC Guaynabo safer by preventing criminal activity inside the facility. I commend Senators Ossoff, Grassley, Booker, Hyde-Smith and Cruz for honoring his memory by sponsoring this public safety reform and for recognizing the severity of this problem. By making the introduction of a cell phone into a prison a felony, the *Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act* will allow investigators and prosecutors to more effectively bring to justice those introducing cell phones into prisons, curb the flow of illicit cell phones into prisons, make our communities and prisons safer, and help to save lives. We look forward to working with the House of Representatives on a bipartisan basis, as it considers this critical public safety reform.”

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