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May 2018

Dear Colleagues,

Around this time last year, under the auspices of the International Community Corrections Association (ICCA) we came together to discuss issues we were experiencing with our BOP contracts. Since that time, we have seen the appointment and sudden resignation of BOP Director Mark Inch and participated in several discussions with him and key BOP leadership. Additionally, we closely followed then-Director Inch's Congressional testimony and kept a keen eye on legislation moving through Congress.

I am writing to share what we have learned, to ask for an update on what you are experiencing and suggest steps we can take together going forward.

- July 2017 – Elizabeth Pyke, our ICCA Public Policy Coordinator, arranged a series of Capitol Hill meetings for Anne Connell-Freund, ICCA Immediate Past President and myself with key House and Senate Judiciary Committee leadership offices. The goal of the meetings was to share our collective concern over what we were experiencing from BOP – (low utilization, SOW changes, contract options not being renewed etc.) and the lack of communication about those changes.

We were very encouraged by what we heard. The Hill staff we met with understood the value of Evidence Based Practice, the essential services that RRCs provide and our value to the communities we serve. The response was consistently supportive from both House and Senate staff and from Republicans and Democrats alike. We were assured they would follow-up with BOP to seek answers to our questions. **(Please see the attached letter.)**

- September 2017 – General Mark Inch appointed Director of BOP. Director Inch is the first BOP Director from outside the Bureau – begins his appointment with a 90 day learning and listening tour.
- October 2017 – BOP representatives registered for the ICCA Annual Research Conference and attended a meeting of RRC providers to discuss recent actions the BOP had taken. Although the atmosphere in the meeting was very tense, we did learn that 16 contracts had been discontinued based on a review of utilization, that an additional 2 contracts had been discontinued for operational reasons and that all contract utilization would be brought down and kept to contractual maximum capacity.
- January 2018 – Director Inch, Assistant Director of the Reentry Services Division Hugh Hurwitz and BOP CFO Bradley Gross attend the American Correctional Association (ACA) Community Corrections Committee meeting at the invitation of Committee Chair Phil Nunes.

In a very positive and open discussion, both Director Inch and Assistant Director Hurwitz discussed the drivers of the 16 contracts being discontinued, the need to bring contract utilization in line with contract maximums and the elimination of EBP and other enhancements in the SOW. The Director is focused on operating the RRC network within budgeted capacity.

They acknowledged and apologized for the lack of clear communication to the RRC Provider community about those changes and, perhaps most importantly, Director Inch shared his management directive to his staff to talk to us – clear, open and frequent communication.

- February 2018 – A small group of ICCA representatives met with Director Inch, Chief of Staff Kevin Pistro, Assistant Director Hugh Hurwitz, Chief of Residential Reentry Contracting Dana DiGiacomo, and Administrator of the Residential Reentry Management Branch Jon Gustin.

Key takeaways from that meeting include:

- There is strong support for RRCs. The Director considers himself an "advocate."
- There is a continued focus on operating RRCs within the current budgeted capacity. The Director will assess if that capacity is sufficient and will take action if necessary in future budget years.
- There will continue to be an emphasis on home confinement.
- The Director wants people who need reintegration supports in the RRCs.
- RRC length of stay should be about 120 days. Beyond 6 months may be counterproductive.
- BOP leadership values RRCs and needs the provider network to effectively deliver RRC services. They cannot do it without us.

Prior to our meeting with Director Inch, we met with Jon Gustin and Dana DiGiacomo. Jon addressed the utilization issue many RRCs are still experiencing, saying the goal is to have all RRCs at 90 -95% of contracted capacity, allowing room for USPO placements. Dana discussed with us the issues impacting contracting and contributing to the backlog many providers are experiencing. Multiple staff vacancies, changes to the SOW and challenges to contract award decisions are the key drivers.

- March 2018 – The ICCA Public Policy Forum included a presentation from Jon Gustin and Dana Di Giacomo which highlighted developments at BOP. As in previous years, the Forum also included staff from key congressional offices speaking about the federal prison reform and other legislation that will have direct impact on RRC operations. This panel discussion was followed by meetings on Capitol Hill the next day where we were able to talk about provisions in the various bills that will impact RRC programs and operations.

May 2018 – With Elizabeth Pyke's guidance, we were able to successfully oppose language in the House FIRST STEP Act that would have transferred the National Institute of Corrections to the National Institute of Justice.

I believe that we have made very good progress in developing a positive relationship with our BOP partners and ICCA leadership is working very hard to keep the lines of communication open. However, we still have more work to do!

Several years ago, Acting Director Kane in congressional testimony stated that RRC resources are scarce and expensive. More recently, the effectiveness of RRCs has been questioned. We must not let those statements go unchallenged. ICCA is in the process of developing talking points to refute these claims and we will share with you as soon as they are complete. We will need to build a constructive relationship with Director Inch's successor and continue to educate Members and staff on Capitol Hill about the role of RRCs in improving outcomes for justice-involved individuals and helping to advocate for legislation and funding that supports evidence-based practice.

We continue to build our mailing list with an intent to include **all RRC providers** not just ICCA members. If you know of others we are missing, please share this information with them and share their contact details with ICCA.

While ICCA is mission driven, we need you. Please consider joining us as an Agency member. Your support helps these efforts and brings you closer to a network of colleagues, resources, research and information.

I look forward to our continued dialog. I know many of us have been working on these issues from other angles - I hope you will share what you have learned. Together, we can work to ensure that RRC services are effective and valued and making the positive difference the communities and people we serve deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Donnarumma', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ellen N. Donnarumma
President, ICCA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 26, 2017

Director Mark Inch
Federal Bureau of Prisons
United States Department of Justice
320 First Street NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Director Inch:

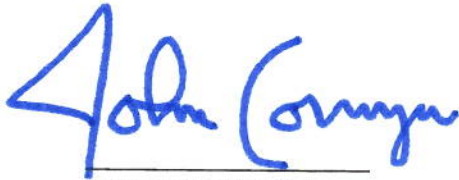
We are a group of United States senators who strongly support efforts to reform our federal prison system by lowering costs, reducing recidivism, and rehabilitating prisoners so that they can become productive members of society upon release. We write to express serious concerns about the Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) revised Statement of Work (SOW) for Residential Reentry Centers (RRCs), which appears to eliminate Cognitive Behavioral Programming (CBP) and a Social Services Coordinator (SSC) position. We believe that these changes in programming and personnel will compromise public safety, decrease inmate accountability, and lead to increased recidivism rates. We also understand that the BOP is reducing its use of Residential Reentry Centers without explanation or advance notice to those most affected. As a consequence, inmates are spending more time in prison, being released directly from prison into the community without the necessary supervision, or spending insufficient time in transitional facilities. These changes, particularly in the absence of a justification, threaten to make our communities less safe while increasing BOP operating costs over time.

Decades of research have shown that providing Cognitive Behavioral Programming in halfway houses reduces recidivism and results in significant savings to the taxpayer. Prison Social Services Coordinators have also played critical roles in facilitating inmates' successful reentry into society by connecting them with employment and other resources through community partnerships and ensuring continuity of care.

The long list of benefits deriving from these resources—including safer communities and reduced recidivism—far outweighs their costs. We urge you to reinstate Cognitive Behavior Programming and the Social Services Coordinator position into the revised Statement of Work and to refrain from decreasing the use of Residential Reentry Centers without transparency and adequate notice to interested parties. In addition, we ask that you provide staff for the undersigned senators with a briefing to explain the decisions underlying the revised Statement of Work and the reduction in residential re-entry center use.

Thank you for your timely attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
United States Senator



CHUCK GRASSLEY
United States Senator



AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator



ROB PORTMAN
United States Senator



AL FRANKEN
United States Senator



THOM TILLIS
United States Senator



BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator