



Stop the Murders and Assaults!

- Nearly 219,000 prison inmates are confined in Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) prisons today, up from 25,000 in 1980, 58,000 in 1990, and 145,000 in 2000. It is expected there will be about 224,000 inmates incarcerated in BOP prisons by the end of FY 2014.
- The explosion in the BOP inmate population is the direct result of Congress approving stricter anti-drug enforcement laws with mandatory minimum sentences in the 1980s, including the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-570) and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-690). Of the 219,000 inmates in BOP prisons, 51% are serving sentences for drug-related offenses. The average sentence length for inmates in BOP custody is over 9 years.
- The number of federal correctional workers who work in BOP prisons, however, is failing to keep pace with the tremendous growth in the BOP prison inmate population. The BOP system is staffed at about an 89% level, as contrasted with the 95% staffing levels in the mid-1990s. This 89% staffing level is below the 90% staffing level that BOP believes to be the minimum staffing level for maintaining the safety and security of BOP prisons.
- Prison inmate overcrowding also is an increasing problem at BOP prisons, despite the activation of new prisons over the past few years. The BOP system today is overcrowded by 37%, up from 31.7% in 2000. Inmate overcrowding is of special concern at higher security prisons, with 54% overcrowding at high security prisons and 44% overcrowding at medium security prisons.
- These serious correctional worker understaffing and prison inmate overcrowding problems are resulting in significant increases in inmate assaults against correctional workers.
- BOP has performed a rigorous analysis of the effects of prison inmate overcrowding and correctional worker understaffing on inmate-on-worker rates of violence - and found that increases in both the inmate-to-worker ratio and the rate of overcrowding at an institution are directly related to increases in the rate of serious inmate assaults on correctional workers. An increase of one in a BOP prison's inmate-to-worker ratio increases the prison's annual serious assault rate by about 4.5 per 5,000 inmates.
- Illustrations of this painful reality include the brutal stabbing murders of Correctional Officer Jose Rivera on June 20, 2008 at the United States Penitentiary in Atwater, CA and Correctional Officer Eric Williams on February 25, 2013 at the United States Penitentiary in Canaan, PA. An additional illustration is the murder of Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati on February 26, 2013 while driving home from the Metropolitan Detention Center in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.

