Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

November 17, 2026

The Honorable William K. Marshall III
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20534

Dear Director Marshall III,

We write with concern regarding the Federal Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) attempts to terminate its legally negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the American Federation of Government Employees' National Council of Prison Locals 33 (CPL-33). Union members, including the 30,000 civil servants represented by CPL-33, are the backbone of the federal penitentiary system, serving in critical jobs that protect our nation.[1] We are aghast at BOP's unceasing, politically motivated efforts to strip away its employees' rights, and the blatant disregard BOP has shown for the welfare of its employees over the past two years.

In September 2025, the BOP terminated its CBA with CPL-33. Although the BOP claimed President Trump's Executive Order 14251 as the basis for its decision, you admitted to the real reason: posting a message to the BOP website on the same day BOP terminated the contract, claiming that the "whole purpose of ending this contract" was because the "union [was] an obstacle to progress" and "the current contract has too often slowed or prevented changes."[2] However, the CBA played a vital role in protecting BOP employees, who serve in some of the nation's most dangerous environments and maintain and uphold our public safety. The CBA established nationwide workplace protections and provided a framework for local unions to negotiate arrangements with wardens and other institutional managers. For example, the CBA addressed how and where staff are assigned to work, their work schedule, including lunch breaks and time off, when workers receive overtime, steps BOP must take to ensure the health and safety of its employees, and the right to union representation.[3]

Following the decision to terminate the contract, the BOP wasted no time in stripping its workers of their rights and due process protections against arbitrary management decisions. The BOP quickly dismantled its labor relations apparatus, changed more than 70 labor-related policies, and rushed to resolve pending disciplinary actions, which now lacked the procedural safeguards of the original CBA, including union representation of the employee accused of

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[1] *National Council of Prison Locals v. Federal Bureau of Prisons*. No. 3:25-CV-01907 (VDO), U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut, September 29, 2026. *American Federation of Government Employees*, www.afge.org/globalassets/documents/bop/afge-pi-order_bop.pdf.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

wrongdoing by management.[4] These changes had immediate, real-life consequences. In two egregious instances, BOP sent a sick-leave abuse letter to an employee who was in the hospital for kidney surgery and placed a different employee who was recovering from surgery on Absent Without Leave (AWOL) status, erroneously and unconscionably threatening them with termination if they did not return to work. Without the CBA, these employees had to face disciplinary proceedings without due process or union support.[5] These unwarranted, arbitrary actions are precisely why the CBA provides for a fair review process of management accusations.

Despite the preliminary injunction issued earlier this year, BOP continues to pursue avenues to avoid operating under the CBA[6]. In October 2026, BOP attempted to circumvent the injunction by rescinding its original termination that had been enjoined, and then immediately re-terminating the contract.[7] Although the court voided this naked power play to evade the court's order and BOP eventually filed a Notice of Compliance with the Judge's orders on October 28, 2026, we are concerned that the BOP will continue to undermine the CBA as the Bureau's actions impact its employees across the country.[8] In fact, staff have reported that the BOP's attempts to terminate the contract are leading to low staff morale.[9] A union representative at the Federal Correctional Institution in Mendota, California, described the efforts as "nothing more than…giving the rule of law the middle finger."[10] He also voiced his concerns that the BOP is still not honoring certain workplace agreements, including providing essential safety equipment such as footwear.[11] We find it unacceptable for the BOP to subvert the CBA and leave workers who are upholding our public safety system without critical protections.

The BOP's efforts to end the CBA with CPL-33 are one more example in a litany of actions the Trump Administration is taking to dismantle workers' rights and protections. Since President Trump took office, his administration has eliminated the collective bargaining rights of more than one million federal workers.[12] These efforts attack not only unions but also individual civil servants across our country. We strongly oppose BOP's efforts to undermine CPL-33, and we urge BOP to end its misguided effort to terminate the Collective Bargaining Agreements immediately.

Sincerely,

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Walter Pavlo, "Federal Prison Union Wins In Court, Battle On With Bureau Of Prisons," October 29, 2026, *Forbes*, https://www.forbes.com/sites/walterpavlo/2026/10/29/prison-union-wins-in-court-battle-with-bureau-of-prisons-continues/

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

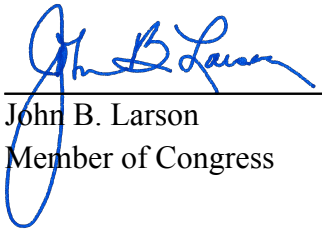
[12] Aurelia Glass, "The Trump Administration Ended Collective Bargaining for 1 Million Federal Workers," October 1, 2025, *Center for American Progress (CAP)*, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-trump-administration-ended-collective-bargaining-for-1-million-federal-workers/



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United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



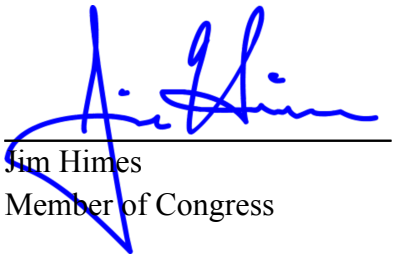
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



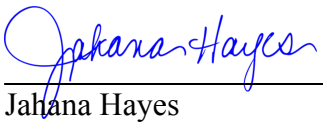
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