

March 16, 2021

The Honorable Merrick Garland  
Attorney General of the United States  
145 N St NE,  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Attorney General Merrick Garland,

I am deeply passionate about efforts to reform our criminal justice and carceral system and have made it a priority to act on these values in my professional life as an employer who has hired hundreds of formerly incarcerated individuals, in my personal life as a philanthropist, and in public service as a member of the United States Congress.

Prior to COVID-19, as the Representative of Maryland's 6th Congressional District, I had the opportunity to visit FCI Cumberland and speak with a number of stakeholders, including the warden, corrections officers, as well as inmates. During the previous Administration, I wrote several letters to BOP leadership to urge their adoption of greater transparency in data collection and reporting, stronger adherence to COVID-19 transfer and quarantine protocols, and progress on implementation of the carceral programs that were mandated by the *First Step Act*<sup>1</sup>.

Up to this point, the agency has produced a less than satisfactory response to my inquiries with sparse information on basic issues, such as the agency's response to COVID-19, rehabilitative programming, and workforce and educational opportunities available to incarcerated individuals at BOP facilities. I believe it is necessary for our nation to move forward and address the issues that incarcerated individuals experience in a clear, transparent, and timely way. I look forward to seeing that under your leadership.

I am eager to continue the work of transforming our nation's criminal justice system as a new member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science. I believe with the assistance of your Administration's leadership, we have a real opportunity to reimagine a system that is based on rehabilitation, not retribution. As we work toward these shared goals, I have several ideas I hope you might consider as we look to build back better. They include:

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<sup>1</sup> D.Trone, letter to Bureau of Prisons Director Michael Carvaja, March 31, 2020.  
[https://trone.house.gov/sites/trone.house.gov/files/wysiwyg\\_uploaded/Letter%20to%20BOP%20COVID%2019%20Response%20%28002%29.pdf](https://trone.house.gov/sites/trone.house.gov/files/wysiwyg_uploaded/Letter%20to%20BOP%20COVID%2019%20Response%20%28002%29.pdf)

- Taking immediate steps to improve the long-standing issue of the BOP's lack of transparent, accurate, and timely data collection and reporting by detailing a list of what the current and planned agency procedural and statutory changes are necessary to accomplish the goal of tracking outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals upon re-entry. Without this information, we are unable to assess the effectiveness of BOP programs and ensure that the BOP is meeting its mandate of rehabilitation and recidivism reduction;
- Providing a staff briefing on the process and progress of implementing the re-issuance of Pell Grants for incarcerated individuals pursuant to the 2021 omnibus spending bill and rehabilitative programs mandated by the *First Step Act*; and
- Beginning planning efforts to establish a Private Sector Council within the BOP to encourage businesses to partner with federal, state, and local prisons and jails in order to expand career pathways for justice-impacted individuals. Every year, approximately 10 million people in the United States reenter their communities from jail or prison and face an unemployment rate that is nearly five times the national average. As a business owner who was previously recognized as a White House Second Chance Employer during the Obama Administration, I have witnessed first-hand how this kind of partnership development can be led by the Executive Branch, and I would be happy to do whatever it takes in order to ensure this initiative is successful.

My office looks forward to collaborating with you, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Bureau of Prisons to fashion a future for justice-impacted individuals that is filled with hope, opportunity, and transformation.

Sincerely,



David Trone  
Member of Congress