

FRED KELLER

PENNSYLVANIA'S 12TH DISTRICT

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 4, 2021

CONTACT: Michael A. Plummer
PHONE: (202) 577-7121
EMAIL: michael.plummer@mail.house.gov

ICYMI: Congressional Bureau of Prisons Reform Caucus continues to gain traction, receives endorsements from leading federal prison reform groups

Washington, D.C. – In case you missed it, 10 of the nation’s leading prison reform advocacy groups endorsed the Congressional Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Reform Caucus, a bipartisan group of lawmakers formed by Congressman Fred Keller last year in an effort to increase accountability and transparency within the federal Bureau of Prisons.

Last week, [Northcentral PA](#) covered the BOP Reform Caucus’ first in-person meeting with BOP Director Michael Carvajal and officials from the Council of Prison Locals to discuss ways Congress can strengthen its working relationship with the BOP.

The BOP Reform Caucus currently has 25 Members. They include Representatives Fred Keller (PA-12), Matt Cartwright (PA-08) Elise Stefanik (NY-21), Rodney Davis (IL-13), Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson (PA-15), Andy Kim (NJ-03), Mike Bost (IL-12), Pete Stauber (MN-08), Larry Bucshon (IN-08), Glenn Grothman (WI-06), Randy Weber (TX-14), Mike Johnson (LA-04), Jay Obernolte (CA-08), Lance Gooden (TX-05), Salud Carbajal (CA-24), David Trone (MD-06), Don Bacon (NE-2), Rick Crawford (AR-01), Kelly Armstrong (ND-At Large), Darrell Issa (CA-50), Byron Donalds (FL-19), Peter Meijer (MI-03), Frank Lucas (OK-03), Mary Miller (IL-15), and Jeff Van Drew (NJ-02).

Alice Marie Johnson, CEO, Taking Action for Good Foundation:

“I commend the formation of the BOP [Reform] Caucus, which shows that progress is possible when lawmakers unite to promote justice and mercy for the men and women in our federal prisons. With much work to be done, we look forward to working with the BOP Caucus Members to address issues within the Bureau of Prisons, including expanding opportunities for compassionate release and implementing the *First Step Act*.”

Jason Pye, Director, Rule of Law Initiatives, Due Process Institute:

“We are excited to see the formation of a bipartisan BOP Reform Caucus and strongly urge Republicans and Democrats to join this important group of members who are working to improve the Bureau of

Prisons. Nearly three years after the passage of the *First Step Act*, it's clear there is still much work to be done to increase transparency, efficiency, and fairness and the COVID-19 pandemic magnified the long-existing underutilization of compassionate release. Due Process Institute looks forward to working with the members of the BOP Caucus to improve the way our federal corrections system operates."

Patrick Purtill, Director of Legislative Affairs, Faith and Freedom Coalition:

"The Bureau of Prisons Reform Caucus does exceptional work to improve the conditions for correctional officers and inmates. The BOP Reform Caucus understands that Congress must work towards increasing transparency, promoting public safety, and requiring government to tighten its belt within the justice system. We applaud the work of the Caucus and hope to see better conditions for correctional officers and inmates within the BOP system."

Ronal Serpas, Executive Director, Law Enforcement Leaders:

"The bipartisan Bureau of Prisons Reform Caucus provides a critical forum for our nation's leaders to ensure greater transparency and accountability from the BOP. Congress must prioritize and resolve the broad range of issues – from insufficient oversight to staffing shortages – that continue to plague the BOP."

Kyle O'Dowd, Interim Executive Director, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers:

"The COVID-19 pandemic exposed serious weaknesses in our federal prison system, but also provided a blueprint for reform. Congress should take an active role in ensuring that BOP builds on the lessons of the pandemic to ensure the safety of incarcerated persons and the community, promote rehabilitation and reentry, and maximize alternatives to incarceration. The BOP Reform Caucus can open a bipartisan dialogue on these issues and lead the way in creating a more humane and rational prison system."

Rabbi Moshe Margaretten, President, Tzedek Association:

"Tzedek Association strongly supports the BOP Reform Caucus. The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) plays a pivotal role in keeping society safe, not just by securely housing people who have committed crimes, but also by assisting the men and women in BOP facilities to become better, more productive citizens when they eventually reenter society. BOP needs the tools, resources and Congressional encouragement to invest in rehabilitation and recidivism reduction, so that crimes are not re-committed and our communities are safer. This bipartisan caucus can play an important role in assisting BOP to accomplish this objective. We also believe that America is a compassionate country, and its federal prison system should reflect that value. This caucus can and should support legislation and policies that are in line with that ethic. For all this to happen, the BOP staff -- from the Correctional Officers, to the Chaplains, to the Wardens and to the hard-working staff at BOP's Central Office -- should receive the support and resources they need to do their jobs well."

Kara Gotsch, Deputy Director, Sentencing Project:

"Congress must fully exercise its oversight authority over the Bureau of Prisons to ensure people in prisons are protected during the pandemic, especially for those elderly people who do not present a credible threat to public safety. The Sentencing Project applauds Representative Fred Keller's leadership in creating the BOP Reform Caucus to better prepare for current and future crises"

Kandia N. Milton, Policy Director, *Dream Corps*:

There is bipartisan consensus that carrying out the historic opportunity of the *First Step Act* starts with increasing transparency. By bringing both Democrats and Republicans together, the Bureau of Prison Reform Caucus takes the necessary steps to reach this end while also helping to cut through the red tape holding back progress and preventing thousands of people from returning safely home to their families. We look forward to working with Representative Keller and members in both parties to bring integrity and accountability to the BOP.

Kevin Ring, President, *Families Against Mandatory Minimums*:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted what families of incarcerated people and correctional officers have always known: transparency, accountability, and proper oversight are vital to the safety and wellbeing of the people who live and work in our federal prisons. Congress must be more vigilant in exercising its oversight role, and independent oversight must be established to ensure accountability and prevent future crises. FAMM is grateful for the BOP Reform Caucus and its work to address the long-standing problems in our federal prisons.”

David Safavian, General Counsel, *American Conservative Union Foundation*:

“It is high time that Congress address issues facing both federal prisoners and correctional officers alike. The newly created BOP Reform Caucus must help develop policies that strengthen public safety, advance human dignity, and ensure that the prison bureaucracy is held accountable for the results it delivers to the taxpayers. On behalf of the American Conservative Union Foundation, we commend Representative Keller for taking this important step.”

Follow the BOP Reform Caucus on Twitter [@BOPReformCaucus](#) or by clicking [here](#).

###