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March 22, 2020

Michael Carvajal  
Director  
United States Bureau of Prisons  
320 1st St NW  
Washington, DC 20534

Dear Director Carvajal:

I appreciate the work and responsiveness of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) during the COVID-19 outbreak. Now, as always, ensuring the health and safety of Americans, including personnel at BOP facilities in Pennsylvania, is my top priority.

While I appreciate your communication that there is no immediate plan to move inmates to USP Lewisburg or FCC Allenwood, I am writing to express serious concerns with any future decision to do so.

As part of the BOP COVID-19 Action Plan, on March 13, 2020, BOP announced it would suspend social visits, legal visits, and inmate transfers for 30 days. However, on March 19, 2020, BOP announced an update that "BOP may need to move inmates to better manage the detention bedspace as well as assure that administrative facilities do not become overcrowded beyond available resources." The updated Action Plan goes on to state that "all inmates are being authorized for movements from all facilities" under certain conditions, including an exit screening for COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, and temperature) on inmates to be transferred.

Despite these safeguards, it is clear that BOP can no longer guarantee transferred inmates are free of COVID-19 and can no longer guarantee the safety of BOP personnel should inmates from affected areas like New York be transferred to locations that have no or few cases of COVID-19.

On March 21, 2020, the *Associated Press* wrote an article, "1st Fed Inmate Tests Positive for Coronavirus," in which it reported an inmate in BOP custody at a federal jail in New York City became the first federal inmate to have a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Currently, New York state—particularly New York City—is one of the areas most affected by the highly-contagious COVID-19 virus. Pennsylvania has been affected to a lesser degree. In Union County, where USP Lewisburg and FCC Allenwood are located, there are currently no confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Given the above report, and the serious risk of contributing to community spread of COVID-19, I request that no inmates from affected areas be transferred to USP Lewisburg, FCC Allenwood, or USP Canaan. To transfer inmates to these facilities following the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the federal BOP system would be irresponsible and put at risk the health and safety of correctional officers, their families, inmates, and the broader central and northeast Pennsylvania community.

Stopping the spread of COVID-19 is a national concern, requiring a national effort. That effort requires that BOP take all necessary steps to ensure their employees, and inmates in their care, do not become infected. At this time, BOP must halt all prisoner transfers from high risk areas like New York to relatively low risk areas like central and northeast Pennsylvania until BOP can guarantee that doing so will not contribute to community spread of COVID-19.

Your prompt written response to this matter is appreciated. In addition to the above request, I am aware of the March 21, 2020, letter from Sen. Bob Casey outlining his concerns about possible transfers. I request to be included on your written response to Sen. Casey's letter.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fred Keller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "F" and "K".

Fred Keller  
Member of Congress