



AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

**American Federation
of Labor and
Congress of Industrial
Organizations**

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December 29, 2023

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland:

On behalf of the 12.5 million members of the AFL-CIO, I stand with our affiliated union, the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE), and AFGE Local 4070, which represents the 471 correctional officers at Federal Correctional Institution, Thomson (FCI Thomson), in Thomson, Illinois, and request that you direct the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Prisons to rescind its recent decision to eliminate the 25% retention pay at FCI Thomson which is scheduled to take effect at the end of this month.

Because of its remote location, cost of living, low morale and challenges to working conditions, FCI Thomson has endured years of high turnover and dangerous understaffing. To address this, the Federal Bureau of Prisons authorized a 25% retention pay in early 2022. If the retention pay is not restored, there is likely to be an immediate loss of current personnel and difficulty with recruitment and retention going forward. Already, nearly 150 members of the staff have indicated in writing they will leave if they lose this retention pay.

These workers are federal employees doing hard and dangerous work. It is important that this Administration take seriously the health and safety concerns of its own employees and be a role model for all employers. I ask you to step in and assure that this untimely and potentially dangerous decision is retracted.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth H. Shuler
President

EHS/MD/vh

cc: White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zeints
Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons Colette S. Peters
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
The Honorable Tammy Duckworth