

The Honorable Lucy McBath (GA-07)

Testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability

Member Day Hearing on Priorities in the 118th Congress

December 11, 2023

Thank you, Chair Comer and Ranking Member Raskin, for hosting today's Member Day for the Oversight Committee.

I am here to discuss the Federal Prison Oversight Act. My bill, co-led by Representative Armstrong, is currently awaiting consideration by the committee.

The Federal Prison Oversight Act is a bipartisan and bicameral bill with one goal: increasing transparency and accountability across our federal prison system.

My legislation will establish a federal framework for comprehensive, risk-based inspections of federal prisons to identify areas of improvement to make our federal prisons safer for staff and inmates.

As we evaluate and improve our federal prison system, it is absolutely necessary that we take a wholesome approach and identify the best and most effective practices implemented at the administrative, staff, and inmate levels.

This bill provides for recommendations in many areas, such as revamping our recidivism reduction programs, improving working conditions for staff, and adequately responding to incidents of violence and abuse against both staff and inmates.

Moreover, this legislation prioritizes the safety of everyone. The Inspector General at the Department of Justice can analyze a long list of areas and include them in their report. Our prison system has a notorious reputation for unhealthy conditions, abuse, and neglect, and this bill aims to combat that.

Our federal prison system, holding over 150,000 individuals and employing about 35,000 individuals, should be transparent, accountable, effective, and safe.

So many of our criminal justice issues could be improved if our prisons had more accountability and transparency. The caliber of improvements that could arise

from this oversight would be life-changing for everyone encountering our federal prisons – staff would face better working conditions, and inmates would have a better opportunity for humane treatment.

I encourage the Oversight Committee to consider the Federal Prison Oversight Act – which, I might add, **has no effect on direct spending or revenues as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office.**

I look forward to working with this committee to bring accountability and transparency to our Federal Prisons.