

Senator Amy Klobuchar
Re: Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on "The Nation's Correctional
Staffing Crisis: Assessing the Toll on
Correctional Officers and Incarcerated Persons"

Senator, Thank you for your concern about the impacts of the staffing crisis on people in America's carceral environment. We are appreciative of your inquiry and believe it is prudent to confront the mechanism of accommodation during this crisis—augmentation. We offer the following recommendations, understanding that they are temporary and intermediary steps toward addressing the more significant problem.

Recommendations

- 1) Legislation for the study of utilization and regulation of augmentation, enhanced training, and comprehensive worker support:
 - a) Convene a select subcommittee to evaluate BOP practices, including augmentation use, ensuring transparency, accountability, and adjustments based on effectiveness, and set clear guidelines and limits for augmentation, ensuring it is only temporary under specific conditions.
 - b) Training and Support for Staff:
 - i) Implement comprehensive training programs for non-custodial staff assigned to custodial roles. These programs should cover operational aspects of correctional work, stress management, conflict resolution, and holistic self-care techniques.
 - c) Enact legislation to increase funding for hiring additional correctional staff, directly addressing staffing shortages to reduce reliance on augmentation.
 - d) Enhance and expand incentive programs, ensuring they are competitive and consistent across all facilities, to attract and retain staff, thereby reducing the necessity for augmentation.
- 2) Recommendation that all corrections departments prioritize the establishment of an Office of Corrections Ombudsman.
 - a) Establishing such an office would allow correctional departments to conduct extensive research to monitor the understaffing crisis, analyze recruitment and retention successes and failures, and assess the overall well-being of correctional staff and incarcerated individuals. This would ensure a comprehensive review of the critical issues affecting the system's efficiency and the welfare of all those impacted.

Respectfully,
Stephen B. Walker
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OneVoice United