



GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

5 May 2006

The Honorable Harley G. Lappin
Director
Bureau of Prisons
U.S. Department of Justice
320 First Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Director Lappin,

I am writing to you to express our keen concern about an incident at the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in Chicago in which six Correctional officers left the facility at the end of their shift and were attacked by a large group in a parking lot. Two of these officers were injured seriously enough that they required medical attention.

It is my understanding that the guidance memorandum you issued on 27 February 2006 regarding the Law Enforcement Officers' Safety Act (LEOSA) reflected agreements reached between the Bureau and the union which represents Bureau of Prison Employees (BOP) employees. The memorandum specifically states that no agreement was reached on the storage of staff's personal weapons at BOP facilities. This is the subject which I would like to address in the letter, as the F.O.P. strongly feels that this policy is detrimental to the safety of BOP staff when they are arriving and departing from work--as the attack on the six officers in Chicago clearly demonstrates.

For the men and women of law enforcement, the LEOSA has never been a firearms issue--it is and always has been an officer safety issue. The primary purpose of the LEOSA is to ensure that officers, regardless of their duty status, can lawfully defend themselves and their families from vindictive criminals. We believe that the BOP's policy of prohibiting the storage of personal firearms by staff who are lawfully able to carry those firearms when off-duty is rendering these officer vulnerable when in they are transit to and from work, as the six officers in Chicago discovered on 30 March. Those officers were fortunate that the incident did not result in more serious injuries or even death, as they have in at least two previous incidents involving local correctional officers of which the F.O.P. is aware.

Senator Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT), the Senate sponsor of the LEOSA, remarked on the floor the day the bill was adopted by the Senate: "Convicted criminals often have long and exacting memories. A law enforcement officer is a target in uniform and out, active or retired, on duty or off duty." Senator Leahy is exactly right, and the BOP policy regarding personal weapons

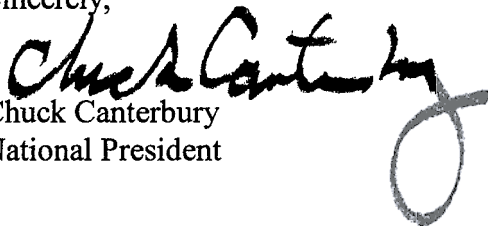
—BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION—

storage makes it impossible for them to carry a firearm when commuting to and from work--the very time that these officers are most likely to be assaulted.

It is my understanding that all BOP facilities have secure armories, which might be used to store personal weapons and, in at least one instance--at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) Guaynabo in San Juan, Puerto Rico--a storage facility for the personal weapons of staff is available at the facility. I am given to understand that these storage facilities were made available after several BOP officers working at MDC Guaynabo were assaulted off-duty. I hope the Bureau will demonstrate a similar willingness to revisit the current policy in all BOP facilities in the wake of the incident in Chicago.

I look forward to hearing from you about this and how the Bureau intends to address this very real officer safety issue. Please feel free to contact me directly or Executive Director Jim Pasco at my Washington office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Canterbury". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The "C" at the beginning is large and loops around. The "y" at the end has a long, vertical tail that loops back down.

Chuck Canterbury
National President