

1. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 1, 2009

**SCHUMER REVEALS: OTISVILLE PRISON
DANGEROUSLY UNDERFUNDED - FACILITY 40%
PERCENT OVER CAPACITY AND 14%
UNDERSTAFFED, PUTTING CORRECTIONS
OFFICERS AND STAFF AT RISK**

*Federal Facility Housing 360 More Inmates Than Capacity
- Federal Government Not Providing Enough Funding To
The Bureau Of Prisons*

*Legacy of Inadequate Funding Has Left Major Federal
Prison in New York Dangerously Understaffed*

*After Tour of Prison, Schumer Pushes for More Federal
Funding For Hiring and Training at Facility In Otisville
And Across The Country*

Following a tour of the Otisville Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Orange County, U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer will reveal that the facility is dangerously understaffed and underfunded. The number of employees at the prison falls 14% short of the number recommended by the federal Bureau of Prisons. At the same time, the facility is far over capacity, with 42.7% more inmates than the facility was designed to hold safely. Schumer said that all of New York's federal facilities are in similarly dire straits due to a long term lack of funding on the federal level. According to the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), the average daily population at Otisville in 2009 was 1,205 - 361 more than the facility's official "rated" capacity of 844. At the same time, Otisville Prison was operating with 44 fewer guards than are needed and authorized. Today, Senator Schumer toured the prison and called on Congress for adequate funding for the Federal Bureau of Prisons to improve the safety and effectiveness of our Corrections Officers who are doing so much with so little.

“We cannot treat these critical prisons like an afterthought,” Schumer said. “These facilities house dangerous criminals and cannot be bursting at the seams, putting correctional officers in a dangerous position. Years of cutbacks and budget shortfalls have left New York's federal prisons in crisis. The Administration and Congress must boost resources and manpower now to avoid a potential disaster.”

The FCI Otisville is a medium security facility that houses adult male offenders. A medium security FCI has a strengthened perimeter (often a double fence with electronic detection systems), mostly cell-type housing, a wide variety of work and treatment programs, and a higher staff-to-inmate ratio than lower security FCIs. The facility also houses a minimum-security "satellite prison camp" that also houses adult male offenders.

FCI Otisville is situated in Orange County and 70 miles northwest of New York City.

Schumer today revealed that the Otisville facility is 40 percent overcrowded and severely understaffed. Based on average daily population figures from 2009:

* The federal prison in Otisville in Orange County has a recommended capacity of 844 but now has an average daily population of 1,205, meaning it is 42.7 percent over capacity.

According to a letter from the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to Senator Schumer, the overcrowding crisis at Otisville has forced the facility to house "inmates in areas within the institution which were not originally designed as inmate sleeping areas." Schumer said that the main reason the institution is more than 40 percent over capacity is because the Bureau of Prisons does not have sufficient bed space in New York and across the country.

Schumer said that other federal prisons in New York are in similarly dire straits. Statistics show that federal prison facilities in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Ray Brook, are all more than 50 percent overcrowded and also severely understaffed. Prisons across the country are not much better off. Facilities outside of New York are, on average, 37 percent overcrowded.

In addition to being severely overcrowded, the prisons in New York are significantly short-handed. Otisville currently has 44 positions vacant. Schumer said that BOP on some occasions has been forced to use non-correctional staff (such as counselors or managers) for correctional duties to fill the gap.

According to the BOP's own studies, including one conducted in 2005, on average, an increase in overcrowding and staffing shortages are directly associated with an increase in serious assaults. Fortunately, all four New York facilities have been

exceptionally safe, and assault numbers were down in 2007.

"Just look at BOP's own studies," Schumer said.

"Overcrowding and staffing shortages are a dangerous recipe in our federal prisons. Thankfully, knock-on-wood, New York's prisons have remained relatively safe. But we need to do everything to make sure that the good men and women working at FCI Otisville and other facilities around the state have everything they need."

To help prevent any risk of harm to inmates or staff, Schumer today called for a significant increase in federal funding for staffing and operations at federal prisons in New York and across the country. The increase in funding will substantially improve the safety and effectiveness of New York State Corrections Officers who are already doing so much with so little. He announced that he is drafting a letter to his colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee, asking that increased funding be directed to the BOP. He also announced plans to meet with the Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Harley G. Lappin, to get a full rundown of the needs of the BOP, and to pledge his commitment to helping BOP to obtain the resources it needs.

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Source: http://schumer.senate.gov/new_website/record_print.cfm?id=313811