



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
**Federal Bureau of Prisons**

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*Office of the General Counsel*

*Washington, DC 20534*

**JUN 30 2021**

Campaign Legal Center  
1101 14<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: Inmate Voter Registration

Dear Campaign Legal Center:

I write in response to your June 16, 2021, letter asking the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to consider implementing policies and procedures that would facilitate inmate voter registration and voting within BOP facilities.

The BOP recognizes that voter registration education and the facilitation of voter registration is a valuable exercise of American democracy and an important facet of successful reentry into the community. To that end, the BOP has implemented a series of actions to assist eligible residents with their voter registration. While these efforts have recently involved D.C. residents, the BOP is endeavoring to expand this assistance to residents of Maine and Vermont.

In order to protect individual privacy, and in accordance with Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), section 513.34, the BOP does not release an inmate's personal identifying information without the inmate's explicit consent. Therefore, in this recent implementation, the BOP disseminated general D.C. voter registration information electronically to all inmates in BOP custody. The BOP also provided voter information and registration materials at the institution level through the Reentry Affairs Coordinator (RAC). As early as August 2020, the BOP sent the first of three electronic messages to all BOP inmates regarding D.C. resident voter registration through the Trust Fund Limited Inmate Computer System

(TRULINCS). These messages, captioned with a banner reading "D.C. Residents," specifically notified D.C. inmates convicted of felony offenses of their eligibility to register to vote in the upcoming election. These emails contained informational material detailing the criteria for registration eligibility, registration instructions, and printable voter registration forms in both English and Spanish. Additionally, the BOP electronically disseminated informational material provided by the League of Women Voters. The BOP also directed the D.C. Board of Elections (BOE) to mail voter registration forms and prepaid, self-addressed envelopes to all institutions and contract facilities for inmate use. These steps ensured D.C. inmates had access to voter registration material electronically through the inmate email system and physically through each institution's resource center. To facilitate registration, the BOP provided the BOE with the contact information of the RAC at each institution. In addition, at the request of Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services, voter information and registration materials were made available in order to provide an enhanced level of support to inmates who require assistance with registration. Similarly, 14 visually-impaired inmates received hand-delivered voter registration materials to be completed with assistance.

In addition to facilitating the registration of inmate voters, the BOP implemented procedures to protect and return ballots. Generally, and in accordance with BOP policy, outgoing inmate mail is delivered to institution mailrooms unsealed for possible examination and inspection. Voter ballots, however, were permitted to be delivered sealed to the mailroom to protect voter privacy and allow for faster processing.

According to the BOE, the BOP's efforts resulted in the successful registration of approximately 500 D.C. residents for the November 2020 election. The BOP continues to work in conjunction with the BOE to obtain paper and electronic voter registration informational material and voter registration forms to be made available to all D.C. resident inmates.

The BOP is actively assessing additional procedures to continue existing registration supports and expand the dissemination of voter registration information. In particular, the BOP is evaluating the viability of:

- Fostering connections with election officials in Maine and Vermont to obtain multilingual voter registration information to be disseminated to the inmate population;
- Including instructions as to where and when voter registration information and registration materials can be physically and electronically located in inmate Admissions and Orientation materials;
- Disseminating, on a monthly basis, electronic notices containing multilingual voter registration information, instructions, and registration materials from D.C., Maine, and Vermont;
- Posting multilingual voter registration information and instructions in each housing unit;
- Evaluating the need for and execution of additional resources and assistance for disabled inmates to obtain voter registration information and complete forms;
- Investigating the feasibility of a routine use exception through the Department of Justice to allow for the release of voter information directly to state/local election officials to facilitate the direct mailing of physical voter registration information to eligible resident inmates;
- Developing policies and procedures for the BOP's Reentry Services Division to provide educational materials notifying individuals leaving federal custody of the restrictions, if any, on their ability to vote under the laws of the state where the individual resides and, if any such restrictions exist, the point at which the individual's rights will be restored under applicable state law pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 4042(a)(7) as explained in section 9(a) of Executive Order No. 14019, 86 Fed. Reg. 13623 (March 7, 2021); and
- Disseminating multilingual voter information and registration materials from D.C., Maine, and Vermont to all residents in BOP Residential Reentry Centers and incorporating voter registration assistance, including securing means of identification, as part of transitional services provided to all residents during their designation.

I trust this is responsive to your inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'K' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Ken Hyle  
Assistant Director/General Counsel