



U.S. Office of Special Counsel
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 218
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS REPORT SUBSTANTIATES ALLEGATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY RISK AT FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Darshan A. Sheth, (202) 254-3617; dsheth@osc.gov

WASHINGTON, DC / March 9, 2010 – Today, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) transmitted to the President and Congress the Federal Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) response to a whistleblower allegation that officials at the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI), Fort Worth, Texas, created a potential safety risk to both inmates and staff at the facility by permitting the placement of industrial sized fans in inmate housing units. The BOP report found that the placement of the fans violated the Code of Federal Regulations and BOP policy.

OSC received these allegations from a whistleblower, a BOP employee, and referred them to the Attorney General for further investigation. The report of investigation, which was conducted by the BOP Office of Internal Affairs (OIA), concluded that FCI Ft. Worth officials permitted the fans "to remain positioned for unspecified periods of time in such manner as to effectively obstruct egress in the case of an emergency...." The report further found that FCI Ft. Worth management failed to act on the whistleblower's complaints regarding the placement and positioning of the fans.

BOP pledged to take appropriate corrective action in response to the findings of the report. BOP has approved FCI Ft. Worth's request to install air conditioning in the housing units in question. Funds have been allocated by BOP for this purpose and the project commenced on February 1, 2010. It is expected to be completed in six months. In addition, training sessions have been planned for FCI Ft. Worth executive staff members and department heads with emphasis upon "their responsibilities relating to the Occupational Safety, Environmental Compliance and Fire Protection Program." OSC determined that the agency's report contains all the information required by statute and the findings appear reasonable.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent investigative and prosecutorial agency and operates as a secure channel for disclosures of whistleblower complaints. Its primary mission is to safeguard the merit system in federal employment by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially retaliation for whistleblowing. OSC also has jurisdiction over the Hatch Act. For more information please visit our web site at www.osc.gov or call 1 (800) 872-9855.