

Senate Unanimously Passes Bipartisan Bill to Crack Down on Cellphones in Federal Prisons; Legislation Stalled in House

Senate Unanimously Passes Bipartisan Bill to Crack Down on Contraband Cellphones in Federal Prisons; Legislation Stalled in House

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The Senate has unanimously passed S. 5284, the [Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act](#), a bipartisan bill aimed at addressing the growing threat of contraband cell phones in federal prisons. The legislation, introduced by Senators Jon Ossoff (D-GA), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), and Cory Booker (D-NJ), would elevate the charge of smuggling a contraband cellphone into a federal prison from a misdemeanor to a felony.



The Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act

The bill is named in honor of Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati, a federal corrections officer who was tragically murdered after inmates used a contraband cell phone to orchestrate the attack.

"When Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati was killed, our lives were shattered. His murder was a stark reminder of the dangers posed by contraband cellphones in our prisons," said Helen Albarati, Lieutenant Albarati's widow. "These devices allow inmates to continue their criminal activities uninterrupted, directing illegal operations and orchestrating violence from behind bars. The threat posed by contraband cell phones in our prisons cannot be overstated. By making the smuggling of contraband cellphones a felony, we can deter this illegal activity and hold those responsible accountable."

The Federal Bureau of Prisons has seen a surge in cellphone activity, enabling inmates to carry on their criminal enterprises as if prison walls did not exist. This is a threat not just to corrections officers like Lieutenant Albarati, but to public safety as a whole.

"A cell phone in a prison is a deadly weapon. Yet, as our investigative work continues to demonstrate, contraband cellphones have proven to be pervasive inside many federal prisons—a reality that undermines the safety and security of these institutions for BOP staff, inmates, and the public," said [Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz](#). "I commend Senators Ossoff, Grassley, Booker, Hyde-Smith, and Cruz for honoring Lieutenant Albarati's memory by sponsoring this public safety reform and for recognizing the severity of this problem. By making the introduction of a cell phone into a prison a felony, the Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act will allow investigators and prosecutors to more effectively bring to justice those introducing cellphones into prisons, curb the flow of illicit cellphones into prisons, make our communities and prisons safer, and help to save lives."

The bill now sits in the House of Representatives, where it awaits action.

"Congress must act now and pass the Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act before another staff member is killed in the line of duty because of contraband cellphones," said Jon Zumkehr, President of AFGE 4070. "Speaker Johnson must take action and bring this bill to a vote. The safety of our corrections officers and the security of our prisons depend on it."

At Thomson Federal Prison in IL, over 388 contraband cell phones were found, but not one case was prosecuted. This is not just an isolated problem at Thomson Prison, but a systemic issue throughout the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Jon Zumkehr

AFGE 4070

jzumkehr@afge4070.org

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