

Fifteen Thomson Federal Prison Staff Member Exposed and Hospitalized

THOMSON, IL, UNITED STATES, April 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fifteen federal law enforcement officers at Thomson Federal Prison were rushed to the hospital today after exposure to dangerous substances in the prison mail room, requiring emergency Narcan administration. This incident follows last week's exposure of ten staff members at Federal Correctional Complex (FCC) Victorville over just four days, marking a dramatic escalation in what union leaders are calling a nationwide safety emergency.



The Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act

The Thomson incident marks the eighth incident of staff hospitalization from drug exposure at that facility alone since January 2024. Last August, the crisis claimed the life of Marc Fischer, a veteran mailroom supervisor at U.S. Penitentiary Atwater and former Coast Guard servicemember, who died after handling contaminated mail shortly before his planned retirement.

"The Federal Bureau of Prisons can no longer remain silent while drug traffickers exploit our mail systems and endanger our staff," said Jon Zumkehr, President of AFGE Local 4070. "These aren't just statistics – these are real people with families who deserve to return home safely after their shifts."

The union's concerns have intensified following the Bureau of Prisons' recent proposal to cut positions due to budget constraints – a move that union leaders say will further compromise safety and increase demands on already-strained staff. AFGE Local 4070 is calling for an immediate halt to all incoming prison mail until proper trafficking prevention measures can be implemented.

Prison overdose rates have soared by 600% in recent years as drug traffickers increasingly target federal facilities through mail systems. A bipartisan solution, [H.R. 1046](#), the "Marc Fischer

Memorial Interdiction of Fentanyl in Postal Mail at Federal Prisons Act," would establish mandatory comprehensive protocols for screening legal mail. The bill, introduced by Representative Don Bacon (NE-02), has received broad support across party lines and from prison staff unions and safety advocates.

While a pilot program has demonstrated the effectiveness of off-site mail screening, it faces discontinuation due to budget limitations. "The mail system remains the primary route for drugs entering our facilities," Zumkehr emphasized. "Without proper screening measures, we're gambling with our officers' lives."

AFGE Local 4070 is demanding immediate action from Congress and the to pass H.R. 1046 and implement comprehensive screening procedures across all federal correctional facilities.

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