

Federal Bureau of Prisons Moves Forward with 70 Law Enforcement Job Cuts at Thomson Facility

THOMSON, IL, UNITED STATES, July 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is pushing ahead with plans to eliminate 70 law enforcement jobs at Thomson Federal Prison, a move decided in Washington, D.C. without any real input from local leaders.

Jon Zumkehr, President of AFGE Local 4070, is speaking out forcefully. "These cuts put everyone at risk. Just this Tuesday, we had to reassign 28 officers just to cover the basics. That's 28 fewer people available if there's an emergency. By axing these backup responders, the BOP is making the facility less safe for staff, inmates, and the entire community," Zumkehr said.



The Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act

Zumkehr made it clear: staff safety cannot be sacrificed to save money. "No amount of money is worth risking an officer's life," he said. He called the cuts reckless and unnecessary—especially since Senator Chuck Grassley delivered \$3 billion in BOP staffing funds, signed into law by President Trump just weeks ago.

Despite this historic funding, Thomson is being forced to cut visitation days from five to two per week and drastically reduce inmate programming. Chronic staff shortages and repeated lockdowns have crippled basic operations. "We're now averaging nine lockdowns every month because we simply don't have enough people," Zumkehr said. "This isn't a natural disaster. This is a crisis made by Washington officials who have never even set foot in our facility."

AFGE Local 4070 has done everything possible to support Thomson. The union has spent over \$10,000 on recruitment, but instead of support, all they get are deeper cuts. "Central Office keeps playing with the numbers to make things look fine, but nothing's improving on the

ground,” Zumkehr said.

Zumkehr recently traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with new BOP Director William K. Marshall III, urging him to overturn the decision made right before he took office. Local leaders—along with the Warden—weren’t even consulted. “On Tuesday, we were 28 staff short and had to rely on augmentation just to keep the place running. This isn’t sustainable. It’s dangerous. Central and regional offices have manufactured this crisis. If nothing changes, someone is going to get seriously hurt, or worse,” Zumkehr warned.

AFGE Local 4070 is formally inviting Director Marshall and Assistant Director Cristina Griffith to visit Thomson, see the conditions for themselves, and halt the job cuts before things get worse. “We’ve done everything possible to keep Thomson afloat. The situation is now dire. Staff and inmate safety are on the line,” Zumkehr concluded.

About Augmentation:

When the Federal Bureau of Prisons removes 20 non-custody positions for augmentation—out of 100 needed for the day shift—those 20 staff aren’t replaced. The facility ends up far below recommended staffing levels, compromising safety and security for everyone inside.

Jon Zumkehr

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