

# **Durbin meets with acting director of Bureau of Prisons to discuss Thomson prison activation**

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today met with the U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Acting Director Tom Kane to discuss the activation of the Thomson, Illinois federal prison and federal prison policies under the Trump Administration.

**“Thomson prison is an important component of the Department of Justice’s plan to tackle major challenges faced by our prison system and to promote economic**

**growth in the region,” said Durbin. “Today, Acting Director Kane assured me that the activation of Thomson prison remains on schedule and that they are making good progress on critical infrastructure projects. As Congress moves forward with spending legislation, I will continue to work with Congresswoman Bustos and Senator Duckworth to push for robust funding and resources for the Bureau of Prisons to continue the activation of Thomson prison.”**

Acting Director Kane also committed that Thomson prison will continue to increase its staff in the 2017 calendar year.

In April, Durbin and Bustos led a bipartisan, bicameral [letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Justice urging them to immediately and fully exempt the Bureau of Prisons from the federal hiring freeze ordered by President Trump on January 23, 2017. The lawmakers stressed to Attorney General Jeff Sessions that the security of our nation’s prisons and the safety of our communities are at stake as long as the hiring freeze at BOP is in effect. The hiring freeze has come at a particularly concerning time for Thomson prison as it reportedly forced the facility to postpone hiring a new class of incoming officers and threatened to delay activation of the facility. DOJ has not yet responded to the letter.

Durbin and Kane also discussed the Trump Administration’s troubling decisions to terminate prison education reform initiatives and reverse a planned phase-out of BOP’s use of private prisons. Additionally, Durbin encouraged BOP to continue efforts to reduce the number of federal prisoners and improve conditions in solitary confinement, and improve the implementation of the compassionate release program, which permits federal courts, upon a motion from BOP, to release a federal inmate for “extraordinary and compelling” reasons, such as imminent death or serious incapacitation.