

Thomson Federal Prison Faces Critical Staffing Crisis as Government Shutdown Looms

THOMSON, IL, UNITED STATES, March 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More than 400 federal law enforcement officers at Thomson Prison face severe financial uncertainty as Congress approaches the March 14 shutdown deadline. The facility, already grappling with the nation's highest vacancy rate for a standalone federal prison, now confronts a perfect storm of staffing and safety challenges.



"Our officers will be making impossible choices if the Government shuts down," says Jon Zumkehr, President of AFGE Local 4070. "When federal law enforcement officers earn less than local factory workers and have to choose between childcare and showing up for work, we've got a serious problem. You can't pay daycare providers with IOUs."

“

The time has come for Congress to put aside their differences and fully fund the Bureau of Prisons.”

Jon Zumkehr

The recent elimination of retention bonuses has accelerated the staffing crisis. With childcare costs reaching \$1,500 monthly and rising living expenses, many officers have resorted to taking second jobs to make ends meet. Thomson currently has 134 vacant positions, creating dangerous conditions for both staff and inmates.

The situation has become increasingly dire, as highlighted by a recent incident where eight staff members were [exposed to drugs](#), requiring emergency Narcan administration and hospital transport. This incident underscores the urgent need for improved safety measures, including the implementation of mail scanning technology proposed in [H.R. 1046](#).

AFGE Local 4070 calls for immediate action on three critical fronts:

Secure Federal Bureau of Prisons funding before the March 14 deadline
Reinstate recruitment and retention bonuses at Thomson
Align BOP officer pay with other federal law enforcement agencies

"These aren't just budget items – they're essential investments in public safety," Zumkehr emphasizes. "The costs of overtime, increased recruitment, and emergency response far outweigh any short-term savings from these cuts. We need Congress to act now to protect our officers, inmates, and communities."

The union seeks immediate collaboration with Congress and BOP leadership to address these challenges and ensure Thomson Federal Prison maintains adequate staffing and security standards. Without prompt action, the facility risks losing more qualified officers to higher-paying positions, further compromising safety and operational effectiveness.

Failure to pass a continuing resolution (CR), correctional officers and support staff at Thomson Federal Prison will be classified as essential personnel, requiring them to work without immediate compensation until government funding is restored.

This situation mirrors the previous government shutdown when Thomson's dedicated staff worked for 35 consecutive days without pay, creating severe financial hardships for numerous families in our community.

JON ZUMKEHR
AFGE 4070
jzumkehr@afge4070.org
Visit us on social media:
[Facebook](#)
[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/793371083>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.