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## OSC Helps Federal Bureau of Prisons Whistleblowers

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) secured relief for two Bureau of Prisons (BOP) employees after their managers assigned them to inappropriate office spaces shortly after they made whistleblower disclosures. The BOP's leadership has cooperated with OSC during OSC's investigations.

In one case, a BOP employee's managers ordered her to move her office to a converted jail cell. The order to work out of the cell came soon after the employee blew the whistle on an alleged abuse of management authority and a gross waste of taxpayer dollars. In another case, a BOP employee reported mismanagement and employee misconduct related to BOP's substance abuse program. That employee was then assigned to a new office approximately one-sixth the size of her current office space. The new office is directly next to another employee against whom the complainant has an Equal Employment Opportunity case, as well as a workplace violence claim.

In June 2014, Linda Thomas, a BOP privatization field administrator, disclosed wrongdoing to the Justice Department Office of Inspector General, which referred her case to BOP's Office of Internal Affairs. She also made disclosures to her BOP supervisors and to members of Congress. On September 9, 2014, just three months after making her disclosures, agency officials proposed that Ms. Thomas be moved to work in a converted jail cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago. The converted jail cell was isolated from other administrative offices and would have required Ms. Thomas to climb staircases surrounded by prison inmates. In addition, in the jail cell office, Ms. Thomas would not have been able to use her government-issued smart phone or have access to a direct telephone line, items necessary to perform her job duties. The converted jail cell also lacked a computer, desk, and scanner.

On November 12, 2014, one day before she was scheduled to change offices, BOP agreed to OSC's request not to move Ms. Thomas to the jail cell. Ms. Thomas was allowed to stay in her existing office. In February 2015, during OSC's investigation, BOP moved Ms. Thomas to an appropriate work space in a different Justice Department facility that was satisfactory to her. BOP also agreed to include relevant whistleblower topics in its training for new prison wardens.

In the other case, Julia Landucci, a drug abuse coordinator with the BOP in Waseca, Minnesota, alleged mismanagement and employee misconduct related to the agency's substance abuse program. After her reports, management officials removed her oversight of the drug abuse program, referred her for a mental health exam, and denied her educational reimbursement.

Then, in March 2015, during OSC's investigation of her whistleblower retaliation claim, BOP proposed Ms. Landucci move to a new office that is much smaller and next to a co-worker against whom she has filed complaints. The BOP agreed to OSC's request that the move be postponed while OSC continues to investigate Ms. Landucci's claim.

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*The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: the Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC's primary mission is to advance government accountability, integrity and fairness, safeguarding the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and serving as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing. For more information, please visit our website at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov).*