



One Hundred Twelfth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

October 4, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

I am writing to express my strongest opposition to your Administration's actions to thwart Congress and proceed with purchasing Thomson Correctional Center in northwestern Illinois.

As you are aware, after you ordered the Departments of Justice and Defense to take over Thomson prison and prepare it for transfer of the Guantanamo detainees, Congress responded by passing a number of bills to block your Administration from transferring Guantanamo detainees to the United States for any reason or constructing or modifying any facility in the United States to house those detainees.¹ Despite the clear congressional intent, recent proceedings commenced by the Department of Justice in the Northern District of Illinois clearly tips your Administration's hand that it intends to proceed with a reckless plan of transferring terrorist detainees to the U.S. Homeland.

It is difficult to believe the claim that your Administration intends to use the Thomson facility solely for housing criminals since the Federal government already owns four additional empty prison facilities that are awaiting activation.² By funneling the estimated \$165 million for the Thomson facility, located in your home state of Illinois, the Administration has committed an egregious waste of vital taxpayer dollars. Indeed, if there is no special purpose for the Thomson facility that cannot be fulfilled by one of the existing empty prisons, then I urge that you recommit the funding to higher priority homeland security needs, such as:

- updating the aging fleet of U.S. Coast Guard cutters, which currently spend so much time broken down and under repair that they contributed to the Coast

¹ See, e.g., the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2012, Sec. 8119 (P.L. 112-74 Dec. 23, 2011); the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, Sec. 1026, (PL. 112-81 Dec. 31, 2011).

² Committee on Appropriations. (2012). Appropriations Chairman Blasts Obama Administration's Decision to Open Thomson Prison without Approval from Congress [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://appropriations.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=310365>

Guard's failure to meet performance standards for several of its homeland security missions in fiscal year 2011;

- securing the U.S. government's information networks, which remain vulnerable in the face of ever-increasing cyber attacks, such as the recently reported attack that targeted White House servers used for military operations;
- increasing funding for high-risk urban areas and transportation sectors that continue to be top terror targets;
- providing vital funding to design, build, and implement the national interoperable public safety wireless broadband network on what is commonly referred to as the D-Block; or
- providing funding for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers needed at the ports-of-entry and pre-clearance stations at airports which would not only improve security, but would safely facilitate commerce and address delays at the ports of entry.

On June 12, 2012, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder pledged under oath that your Administration under no circumstances would transfer Guantanamo Bay detainees to the vacant Thomson prison. I assure you that I will make every effort to urge Congress to hold your Administration to that commitment.

Sincerely,



PETER T. KING
Chairman