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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 7, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I write to you again to urge you to keep open the Western Region Detention Facility and to save the 300 union jobs it supports. It is my understanding that a contract for a similar facility in Ohio was able to be extended through the establishment of an Intergovernmental Service Agreement.

It is my hope that we can establish the same agreement here in San Diego to keep this facility open, to save the 300 union jobs it supports, and to provide local detainees better access to their legal representation and family visitation. Attached is the letter I sent to you on September 1 that describes the reasons I believe this facility should remain open.

Thank you again for your commitment to criminal justice reform and for all you do for America's workers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Peters".

SCOTT H. PETERS
Member of Congress

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Congress of the United States
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September 1, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I write to respectfully ask you to reconsider your decision to close the Western Regional Detention facility in San Diego, California, and to save the jobs of the 300 federal workers who support this facility. These jobs with the U.S. Marshals Service are good-paying, union jobs that protect the public safety in the congressional district I represent.

While I fully support the goals of Executive Order 14006 - Reforming Our Incarceration System to Eliminate the Use of Privately Operated Criminal Detention Facilities, I do not believe applying this order to U.S. Marshals' facilities will serve to remedy the problems we face within our criminal justice system.

First, the Western Regional Detention Facility is not a federal prison. The men and women who work at this facility include teachers, counselors, doctors, translators, and others who are committed to providing a safe, humane, and secure facility for those awaiting trial or sentencing.

Second, closing this facility could infringe upon the rights of detainees by limiting access to legal representation and to family visitation. The next nearest USMS detention facility is 146 miles away in Victorville, CA. That is a three hour drive, or more when you factor in California traffic. This dramatically limits the ability of detainees to meet with their legal teams as they prepare for trial or sentencing hearings and makes it extremely difficult for families to visit.

Third, it is my understanding that E.O. 14006 is being selectively enforced; a contract for a similar facility in Ohio was recently extended. My office has reached out to the U.S. Department of Justice to inquire about this inconsistency.

Mr. President, I very much appreciate your commitment to fixing the problems within our criminal justice system, which includes wrongs within our prison system that must be righted. However, I do not believe this important goal is served by closing the Western Regional Detention facility. I urge you to reconsider.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Peters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

SCOTT H. PETERS
Member of Congress