A Win for Staff and Prison Reform

BOP updates classification practices under the First Step Act

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The First Step Act (FSA) represents a significant shift in how the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) manages eligible inmates' transition toward prerelease custody or supervised release. At its core, the FSA incentivizes participation in evidence-based programs and productive activities by allowing eligible individuals to earn time credits, which can be applied toward earlier release into community-based settings.

To ensure full alignment with this statutory framework, the BOP is updating its approach to classification and designation decisions. Staff will now utilize the FSA Conditional Placement Date (FCPD), also known as the time credit worksheet, as the anchor for key inmate management decisions for those eligible to earn and apply FSA time credits under 18 U.S.C. § 3632(d)(4).

What This Means for Staff
This change directly benefits our workforce and operations. By using the FCPD:

- Inmates will be placed in appropriate custody levels sooner, helping to reduce crowding and create a more balanced distribution across facilities.
- Earlier reclassification reduces the need for last-minute transfers, easing the administrative burden on staff and improving planning at all levels. By enabling timely transfers to lower security facilities, BOP reduces unnecessary high-security housing costs and operational strain, resulting in savings to taxpayers and more efficient use of federal resources.
- When inmates are housed in facilities consistent with their remaining time in secure custody, it promotes stability, safety, and smoother day-to-day operations.
- This approach ensures our actions are aligned with federal law and reinforces trust with the courts, Congress, and the public.

"This change reflects our continued commitment to managing the inmate population in a way that is both fair and consistent with the law," said **Rick Stover, Special Assistant to the Director. "By using Conditional Placement Dates**, we are improving operational efficiency, supporting our staff, and honoring the intent of the First Step Act."

During ongoing review team meetings, institutional staff are now directed to:

- Reclassify FSA-eligible inmates based on their Conditional Placement Dates
- Review and initiate placement to lower security levels as appropriate
- Ensure that inmates are housed in the least restrictive environment consistent with security and programming needs

Looking Ahead
This is more than a policy shift, it is a modernization of BOP operations. This update reflects BOP's commitment to strengthening institutional safety, fostering successful reentry, and delivering meaningful cost savings to the American taxpayer.