

McBath, Adams Introduce Landmark Legislation to Address Extreme Temperatures in Prisons | Congresswoman Lucy McBath

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Washington, D.C. — This week, Congresswoman Lucy McBath (GA-6) and Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. (NC-12), introduced the [*Extreme Temperatures Injustice in Prisons Act*](#), landmark legislation to protect incarcerated people and prison staff from dangerous temperatures in facilities across the country managed by the Bureau of Prisons (BOP).

This bill is a continuation of work that Congresswomen McBath and Adams began last year. In March 2026, they successfully launched a U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) study to further understand how the BOP currently tracks and addresses instances of extreme temperatures in their facilities. [They also sent a letter of inquiry to the BOP in August 2025 regarding current conditions in their facilities](#), which informed this bill. In their response letter, the BOP stated that 18,736 incarcerated individuals reported symptoms of heat-related illness and 42 were diagnosed with heat stroke between January 2022 and September 2025.

Extreme temperatures inside federal prisons can pose life-threatening risks. Incarcerated individuals have limited ability to insulate themselves and staff face occupational hazards that are routinely unregulated. Many BOP facilities lack basic climate control, leaving people in cells where temperatures can reach deadly levels during record heat waves and winter freezes. The *Extreme Temperatures Injustice in Prisons Act* would establish the first comprehensive, mandatory federal standards to address this crisis.

“Incarcerated persons do not lose their rights to basic standards of living and safety in federal prison,” **Congresswoman McBath said.** “As states across the country face record breaking temperatures this summer, it is common sense to require standardized installation and maintenance of HVAC systems in all federal prison facilities. This legislation is another important step towards improving our federal prison system.”

“The conditions in our federal prisons are unacceptable,” **said Congresswoman Adams.** “Across all 122 BOP facilities, there are more than 138,000 incarcerated people and roughly 34,000 BOP employees who live and work in these conditions every day. No one

should be forced to endure dangerous, life-threatening temperatures because of aging infrastructure. The federal government has both a moral and constitutional responsibility to maintain safe and humane conditions for those in its custody.”

The Extreme Temperatures Injustice in Prisons Act will:

- Authorize funding for climate control system installation and upgrades in all federal prisons within five years, with temperature monitors in every cell and workspace.
- Set clear health and safety standards for extreme heat and cold across work, recreational activities, and housing.
- Direct the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) to research how extreme temperatures harm incarcerated individuals and staff and develop extra protections for elderly, pregnant, and immunocompromised individuals.
- Provide free cooling and warming supplies — like cold water, fans, warm clothing, and blankets — when temperatures reach dangerous levels.
- Implement accountability measures regarding staff training for recognizing and responding to heat and cold emergencies
- Require regular public reports on HVAC progress, temperature-related illness and deaths, and annual safety inspections.

“Incarcerated individuals deserve to live in safe and humane conditions that are conducive to rehabilitation,” **said Kevin Hagan, Esq., Federal Legislative Affairs Director with FAMM (formerly Families Against Mandatory Minimums).** “Unfortunately, too many live in deplorable conditions, facing extreme temperatures that can prove to be life-threatening. FAMM is proud to endorse the *Extreme Temperatures Injustice in Prisons Act*. This much needed legislation is a step in the right direction towards accountability and reform within America’s prisons.”

“As temperatures across the country rise to deadly levels, people in prisons are left without access to air conditioning and with few heat mitigation options,” **said Sarah Staudt, Director of Policy and Advocacy with Prison Policy Initiative.** “Even the most vulnerable are routinely forced to survive the sweltering conditions as best they can. Some will not make it.” **Staudt adds,** “Prison Policy Initiative strongly supports the *Extreme Temperatures Injustice in Prisons Act*. This urgently needed legislation will ensure that people in prisons have access to air conditioning in the summer and heat in the winter. Among other things, it also compels the Bureau of Prisons to regularly monitor the temperatures incarcerated people are forced to endure, to develop

standards around heat and cold stress, and to ensure that people in federal prisons have access to potentially life-saving temperature mitigation options. Ultimately, a heatwave should not be a death sentence.”

[You can read the full text of the legislation here.](#)