

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 22, 2009

Dear Colleague:

For your review, attached please find a copy of the final report and recommendations of the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission. In 2003, Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act creating this Commission to deal with serious issues of prison sexual assault and to recommend standards to detect, prevent, and address sexual violence in detention settings. With the support of a broad array of stakeholders and advocates, including corrections professionals, religious leaders, academics, advocates, law enforcement, and survivors of prison sexual assault, we have been working together in Congress to focus national attention on this problem.

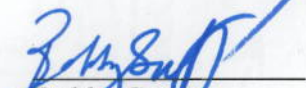
Sexual assault in detention is an issue that touches the lives of millions of people in all parts of our nation. In 2003, more than two million persons were incarcerated in the United States, and in the six years since the Act's passage, the number has continued to grow. In February 2008, the Pew Center on the States' Public Safety Performance Project reported that, for the first time in history, more than one in every one hundred adults in America is detained in a prison or jail.

It's clear that prison sexual assaults have an impact not only on incarcerated persons but also on the programs and services provided to inmates, the safety of the corrections staff, and the entire inmate population. It's also clear that inmates suffering from mental illness and young first-time offenders are more likely to be victims of sexual assault.

The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission was created to undertake the critically important task of identifying the steps and standards needed to meet this challenge. This report and accompanying standards are the result of the Commission's extensive information-gathering and deliberative process.

We commend the members of the Commission for their time, dedication, and diligence in addressing these complex issues. Their leadership is a major step toward resolving this national problem. The members of the Commission deserve great credit for their commitment to this issue, and we commend all those who contributed their knowledge and expertise to this process. We urge you to take the time to review the Commission's recommendations to the Administration and Congress.

  
Edward M. Kennedy

  
Bobby Scott

Sincerely,

  
Jeff Sessions

  
Frank R. Wolf