

Background on Federal Criminal Alien Requirement (CAR) Program

- The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), an agency in the Department of Justice, holds approximately 152,000 individuals who are serving sentences for federal crimes.
- Congress established the Criminal Alien Requirement (CAR) Program as a result of government studies which determined a material weakness in the federal government's ability to identify and remove non-U.S. citizen criminal aliens from the federal prison system.
- Criminal Aliens are non-U.S. citizens convicted of a federal crime by a court of law.
- The CAR Program was created to eliminate those material weaknesses and implement a more cost effective and efficient system to ensure all criminal aliens serving sentences for federal crimes were identified and removed upon completion of their sentence.
- Over the last several years, Congress has provided funding to the BOP for the CAR program to contract with private or public entities to provide secure environments for housing low security criminal aliens.
- To help alleviate overcrowding in BOP institution and respond to congressional mandates, in 1997 the BOP began contracting with privately operated institutions (often referred to as “contract prisons”), at first on a smaller scale and later more extensively, to confine inmates who are primarily low security, criminal alien adult males.
- Criminal alien inmate populations are very homogenous in nature, with a significant portion coming from the same geographic areas and with a large proportion of gang affiliations. Unlike federal inmates who are U.S. citizens, criminal aliens will be returned to their country of origin following the completion of their criminal sentences.
- For numerous reasons, including security and safety concerns, the Federal government has intentionally opted to house this criminal alien population in dedicated facilities separate from those housing U.S. citizen populations who will ultimately be returning to their communities in the United States upon their release.
- Approximately 14,000 (or 9%) of the individuals held by the BOP are non-US citizen criminal aliens. The majority have committed federal felonies while in the country illegally and are serving out their sentences before being processed for removal from the United States upon completion of their sentence.
- **There are presently 11 CAR facilities throughout the U.S., operated by various local municipalities and private contractors, with a total capacity of approximately 20,000 beds. Only approximately 160 U.S. citizens are housed in a contractor-operated federal prison (of nearly 152,000 inmates). Contracted facilities are reserved almost exclusively for criminal aliens who will be returned to their country of origin upon completion of their sentence.**
- As of May 10, 2019, the Average Cost of Incarceration to confine an inmate in a low security BOP facility is \$92.46 while the average cost to confine a prisoner in the CAR program in a privately operated facility is \$66.83 or a difference of approximately 28%.