

## Quinn and Durbin Joint Statement on DOJ Plans to Fully Utilize Thomson Correctional Center

Written by Andrew Mason  
Tuesday, 22 June 2010 08:47

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### ***Facility will be purchased by the end of the year***

CHICAGO – June 21, 2010. U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Illinois Governor Pat Quinn announced today that the Department of Justice (DOJ) intends to acquire the Thomson Correctional Center by the end of the year and fully utilize the entire facility.

In a letter (attached) to Durbin, Quinn and Congressman Don Manzullo (R-IL), a DOJ official explained that the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) plans to make modifications to the prison and hire and train a full complement of staff while the Defense Department and Congress continue to work on authorizing and funding a portion of the Thomson facility for housing Guantanamo detainees.

Durbin and Governor Quinn issued the following statement:

“With this letter today, the Bureau of Prisons has reaffirmed the commitment it made earlier this year to fully utilize Thomson Correction Center and upgrade the facility to make it the safest prison in the nation.

The agency has already begun the process of recruiting for positions at the prison, so having the facility operating at full capacity could result in more jobs for residents of Thomson and surrounding areas.

As we have said many times, this move will have an enormous impact on our state –generating thousands of good paying jobs and potentially injecting more than \$1 billion into the regional economy. This is an opportunity to dramatically reduce unemployment, create thousands of good-paying jobs and breathe new economic life into a part of Illinois that desperately needs this.”

The purchase, activation and operation of Thomson Correctional Center is expected to generate more than 3,000 jobs – roughly half of which are expected to be given to local applicants – and inject more than \$1 billion into the regional economy. Currently, there is a critical need for a facility to address federal prison overcrowding problems nationwide and a particularly urgent need for supermax-type bed space. More than 209,000 inmates are in the custody of the federal Bureau of Prisons, up sharply from 202,000 last year.

The Thomson facility was built in 2001 by the State of Illinois as a state-of-the-art, maximum-security prison to house the most severe criminal offenders. The facility was never occupied, however, and is sitting vacant. The facility was constructed on a 146-acre reservation has 1,600 beds with eight compartmentalized units designed for maximum inmate supervision

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and control. Security features include:

- Dual-sided electrical stun fencing capable of carrying 7,000 volts;
- 312 Cameras on a fiber optic surveillance network with motion detection/remote monitoring capabilities;
- Armed outer and inner perimeter towers.

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