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U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

January 30, 2014

Distinguished members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about the action taken by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to implement the Standards to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to Sexual Abuse and Assault in Confinement Facilities (the DHS PREA Standards) and to highlight our efforts in this area.

CBP is committed to ensuring the safety of all individuals in its custody. Detention standards have always been important to CBP and CBP is committed to preventing, detecting, and responding to sexual abuse in its holding facilities. CBP has fully embraced the DHS PREA Standards, which build on prior policies.

The DHS PREA Standards, which became effective on May 6, 2014, ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual abuse in DHS confinement facilities. Also on May 6, 2014, CBP Commissioner Kerlikowske issued the *CBP Policy on Zero Tolerance of Sexual Abuse* which prohibits all forms of sexual abuse of individuals in CBP custody, including in holding facilities, during transport and during processing.

Immediately upon implementation, CBP appointed an Interim Prevention of Sexual Assault Coordinator (PSA) to begin coordinating efforts across the agency. CBP created a new position and has selected a permanent PSA Coordinator. And, CBP's efforts to implement have been moving forward swiftly, and with the robust support of all offices across CBP.

CBP's Offices of Border Patrol, Field Operations, Air and Marine, and Internal Affairs have all issued guidance to their staff on the DHS PREA Standards and the CBP Zero Tolerance Policy. Notification to field personnel is key to the success of implementing the DHS PREA Standards. To reinforce the DHS PREA Standards, CBP is developing training for all persons that may have contact with detainees in CBP holding facilities. This training will underscore employee obligations for preventing, detecting, and responding to sexual abuse, as well as provide techniques and methods for communicating with individuals who are victims of sexual abuse.

Detainees or third parties can report incidents or allegations without fear of retaliation. In addition, in an effort to ensure that detainees are able to report sexual abuse allegations to third parties, posters were developed and shipped to CBP holding facilities across the United States displaying the phone number of the DHS Office of Inspector General. All sexual abuse allegations must be reported to the Commissioner's Situation Room and the Joint Intake Center. CBP employees who violate the prohibition against sexual abuse will be subject to disciplinary or adverse action up to and including removal from their position and the Federal service.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to describe the actions taken at CBP to implement PREA. I welcome your questions and comments and look forward to continuing this dialogue on this pressing issue with the Commission.