



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1505		DATE: 4/1/2025	
COMMITTEE: Commerce			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: ALEX EATON		PHONE NUMBER: 573-616-9860	
REPRESENTING: ACTION NOW INITIATIVE		TITLE: LOBBYIST	
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CITY: HOUSTON		STATE: TX	ZIP: 77027
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C."HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
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EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com		ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 4/1/2025 11:57 PM

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I am in Support of this Public Safety Bill on its face.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: GWEN SMITH		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: EMPOWER MISSOURI		TITLE: CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY MANAGER	
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As the largest and oldest anti-poverty non-profit in our state, Empower Missouri is committed to improving the quality of life for all Missouri residents through advocacy. Since our inception, Empower Missouri has focused on the criminal justice system and its impacts. Our Community Justice Coalition consists of community advocates and organizations from across the state who work with those who have been impacted by the criminal justice system. Many coalition members are formerly incarcerated or have currently incarcerated loved ones, and all are connected by a vision for a future without mass incarceration.

We are providing testimony today in support of HB 1505, which would create the Missouri Violent Crime Clearance Grant Program wherein the Department of Public Safety would prioritize grant funding for jurisdictions with low clearance rates and a commitment to working with organizations and government entities to reduce violence crime. Decades of research show that harsh sentences are not an effective crime deterrent, and a more effective deterrent is the certainty that you will be caught. However, in 2022, 64% of violent crimes reported to police in Missouri were not solved. Focusing public dollars on improving crime clearance rates is one of the most impactful avenues Missouri can pursue to address public safety concerns, and the program proposed in HB 1505 is a compelling strategy for our state. HB 1505 includes a number of other provisions, all of which affirm the humanity and protect the constitutional rights of Missourians who are incarcerated in jails and prisons. One of these provisions would end the use of restraints on children in juvenile court, except in extreme cases where safety is a legitimate concern. Currently, children in juvenile court can be shackled even if they are accused only of misdemeanor, non-violent or status offenses. By enacting this change, Missouri would join the 32 other states that have banned the use of restraints in juvenile court, including Florida, New Mexico, and South Carolina. The American Bar Association has issued a resolution recommending that all states end the practice of shackling youth. Under the United States Constitution, the use of visible restraints imposed on adult criminal defendants at trial and sentencing may only be employed "in the presence of a special need." Children should be afforded the same protections as adult defendants, but in this instance they are not. Other provisions included in HB 1505 include ensuring individuals incarcerated in Missouri DOC have access to their medical records upon request, and have the opportunity to appoint a personal representative to speak on their behalf regarding medical and other needs with the Department, as well as requiring State Highway Patrol independently investigate any deaths of individuals under age fifty in DOC custody. These provisions acknowledge the reality that the medical care system in Missouri prisons is in crisis, and there have been an unprecedented number of in-custody deaths in recent years. Empower Missouri urges this committee to take action to pass HB 1505 into law. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.



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WITNESS NAME			
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WITNESS NAME: MARIA GOELLNER		PHONE NUMBER: 717-945-9089	
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Thank you to Chair Casteel, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Minority Member Mutz, and members of the Committee for considering this written statement in support of House Bill (HB) 1505, sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins (R-40). I write on behalf of FAMM, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that seeks to create a justice system that respects our American values of individual accountability and dignity while keeping communities safe. HB 1505 would require the Department of Public Safety to collect clearance rate data, publish it quarterly, and limit the use of restraints on children and pregnant people. FAMM particularly supports the provisions allowing incarcerated people to designate a personal representative during initial prison intake, requiring the Missouri Department of Corrections (MDOC) to provide medical records to incarcerated people or their personal representative, creating a hospice care training program for incarcerated people, requiring an independent death investigation of any person under 50 years of age who dies within an MDOC facility, and capping jail and correctional phone call cost at 12 cents per minute. Designating a personal representative incarcerated people have lives and families. Like everyone else, there is a lot of personal business and paperwork that goes along with being an adult. When a person goes to prison, they lose the ability to handle much of this. Similarly, within prison people receive notices, (small) paychecks, programming, hearings, and experience small, medium, and large medical issues from broken arms to terminal diagnoses. It is important for both families and individual incarcerated people to have a trusted personal representative who can receive information or relay information to MDOC administration. Without a formal designation, it is left up to individual correctional staff or facilities to determine who to give information to or get information from. This is a basic step to ensure that MDOC has a formal, trusted outside contact when needed, and that incarcerated people and families have an official line to MDOC. It protects both correctional staff and incarcerated people. Providing medical records Over 23,000 people are incarcerated in MDOC facilities. A high number of these have significant medical diagnoses and require routine medical and/or personal care. MDOC has several dedicated medical units and regularly takes people to hospitals for serious and emergency situations. Unlike in free society, incarcerated people are unable to have a loved one with them to attend the appointment or talk to the doctor. In these situations, it is critical that incarcerated people and their families be able to access medical records to fully understand what is happening. Additionally, Missouri law currently provides two review mechanisms for eligible incarcerated people who are very old or very sick: Medical Parole and Executive Clemency. Though limited in scope, these mechanisms are important for incarcerated people and also MDOC, which may see that a person poses little to no public safety risk but is costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars to incarcerate. Incarcerated people and their families require medical record access to determine their eligibility for these programs and aid in their

application and advocacy. Creating hospice care training program President Trump's First Step Act of 2018 focused significantly on providing incentives for productive, pro-social behavior through education, workforce training, and other programming. FAMM supports policies that provide people with meaningful work, education opportunities, and the like. This program will do that by providing critical skills to incarcerated people that they can use upon release. We encourage the Committee and MDOC to consider the number of people it has with significant medical and hospice needs and expanding the eligibility for Medical Parole. FAMM encourages the Committee to also consider supporting Rep. Jamie Gragg's HB 1360, which would provide the state with its own model of President Trump's First Step Act. Requiring an independent death investigation Prison deaths in Missouri have trended upward over the last several years. There were 139 deaths in Missouri prisons in 2024, "marking the highest total in the state's history." These deaths, particularly when by overdose or violence, are devastating to the family and friends of the deceased. One homicide or overdose in a state owned and controlled facility is too many. Requiring an independent death investigation provides multiple benefits and is good policy. By their nature, prisons are closed environments. It is difficult for the taxpaying public, let alone impacted families, to understand what happens behind the walls. When something as cataclysmic as a death occurs, an automatic investigation will improve public perception by increasing transparency. It will provide much-needed answers to the public and the families of the deceased. It will increase professionalism. This is something that should already be a requirement, particularly given that Missouri has paid over \$66 million in lawsuit settlements and verdicts relating to MDOC in the last four years alone, according to a study by Empower Missouri . Families and taxpayers deserve more. Capping phone call costs Families of incarcerated people have done nothing wrong and yet they must deal day after day with the effects of a loved one in prison. Prison time devastates families emotionally, psychologically, and financially. We regularly speak to mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, husbands, wives, and children in extreme distress over the multi-faceted separation from their loved ones. Families "do the time" with their loved ones. Missouri families maintain love, connection, and cohesion through regular telephone calls. Parents do homework with their children from prison by telephone call. Husbands tell their wives they love them from prison by telephone call. Grandparents sing "happy birthday" to grandchildren from prison by telephone call. Medical diagnoses are relayed, tears are shed, laughter is shared. Life happens for incarcerated families by telephone call. Unfortunately, these calls – like many other aspects of incarceration – cause significant financial hardship. In addition to losing someone who is often a significant source of income or family labor, families must now pay for access to their loved one. Telephone access is often all they have, because people are regularly placed in prisons far away from home, and Missouri is a big state. Many families are completely unable to physically or financially travel hours away to visit their loved ones, which requires money, reliable transportation, time off work, substitute care for children and other loved ones, hotel lodgings, meals out, etc. Prison wages are measly, usually cents per hour. The reality is that families bear the brunt of these costs and suffer because of them. This legislation would remedy one aspect of family hardship by capping the cost of domestic calls in correctional facilities. FAMM recommends adopting free phone and video calls, because family connection is one of the best predictors of success upon release. Helping maintain strong families through incarceration is a public safety issue. Thank you for considering our views. Please reach out to mgoellner@famm.org or (717) 945-9089 for more information or to discuss this matter further.



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WITNESS NAME			
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WITNESS NAME: MATTHEW CHARLES		PHONE NUMBER: 573-616-9860	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: JASON OLIN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: NISKANEN CENTER		TITLE: STATE AFFAIRS MANAGER, CRIMINAL JUSTICE	
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EMAIL: jolin@niskanencenter.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/1/2025 9:10 AM	
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Dear Chairman Casteel, Vice Chairman Wilson, and Ranking Member Butz, I write on behalf of the Niskanen Center to express support for the clearance rates provisions (Sec. 43.505 (2)(5)(6), Sec. 43.505 (3)(2)(a)-(b), and Sec. 650.040) included in HB 1505, which are identical to those included in HB 591. The Niskanen Center is a non-partisan think tank based in Washington, D.C. Our work in criminal justice policy is grounded in the belief that minimizing crime is necessary to a free and prosperous society, and that policies aimed at crime reduction should be rooted in the best available evidence. The violent crime clearance rate in the United States has fallen consistently since the 1960s. Like many other states, Missouri is no exception to this general trend. Missouri is currently only solving around 60% of homicides in the state. A homicide clearance rate of around 60% means that the family and friends of victims are denied the justice that should be theirs by right. It also means that more than three out of every five murders in Missouri do not lead to any punishment, which in turn means untold numbers of murderers are in Missouri communities today, free to prey on their neighbors again. Finally, low clearance rates reduce the cost of choosing to commit murder in Missouri. The most important variable in crime deterrence is the perceived probability of punishment among would-be offenders. Those who believe they'll be caught don't commit crimes; those who believe they'll get away with it do. Allowing homicides and other violent crimes to go unsolved sends a signal to criminals that they have a good chance of getting away with it. The result is more violence. By contrast, solving more crimes sends the opposite message: hurt a Missourian at your own risk. The result is safer streets across the state. It's important to note that low clearance rates do not reflect poorly on law enforcement, who do everything in their power to bring violent criminals to justice. However, police departments—both urban and rural—are today faced with numerous challenges that have strained law enforcement capacity across the board, including the ability to investigate and solve crimes. Just as importantly, the resources available to law enforcement rarely match the importance and urgency of their work. Evidence suggests that resources are critical in solving cases, particularly those that would otherwise go unsolved. We support efforts to provide law enforcement agencies in Missouri with additional resources to help them improve their ability to solve homicides and other violent crimes. In particular, we believe the evidence supports investments aimed at: • Hiring, training, and retaining homicide detectives, violent crime investigators, and non-sworn crime analysts. • Acquiring and upgrading forensic and investigative technology and equipment. • Supporting victims and their families with things like funeral services, crime scene clean up, relocation expenses, lost wage assistance, etc. Today, when a criminal kills one of your constituents, they have a decent chance of getting away with it. We believe that tolerance of homicide impunity is inconsistent with the safety and security of Missouri's citizens. The answer is to improve law enforcement's ability to identify, apprehend, and

prosecute violent criminals. This will require a robust and sustained commitment to ensure investigations are properly resourced. The clearance rates provisions included in HB 1505 reflect an evidence-based approach to crime reduction, and it will help make Missouri safer. These policies are consistent with similar legislation that has passed in Arkansas and is currently pending in Texas and Tennessee. Please do not hesitate to contact me at jolin@niskanencenter.org if I can answer any questions or provide additional information. Sincerely, Jason Olin
State Affairs Manager, Criminal Justice
Niskanen Center