



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1616</b>		DATE: <b>2/26/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Corrections and Public Institutions</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ALEX EATON</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>513-616-9860</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>FAMM-FAMILIES AGAINST MANDATORY MINIMUM</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>1100 H STREET</b>			
CITY: <b>WASHINGTON</b>		STATE: <b>DC</b>	ZIP: <b>20005</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>AMY RULO</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/24/2026 8:02 PM</b>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

I would like to voice my support for HB 1616. I have been on both sides when it comes to the Missouri Department of Corrections. As a staff member, I saw the stress put on nearly every employee within the institution, from Corrections Officers to support staff. There are many policies that are expected to be adhered to. There is a lack of enough staff, as well as a lack of enough staff that actually care about what they do. Policies are followed on a "depending on the staff member" basis a large percentage of the time. Offenders are expected to follow rules, but staff can get away with not doing so very easily. There needs to be more accountability and definitely more oversight as to what is being chrono logged or not chrono logged, what paperwork is actually seen and filed and sent where it is supposed to be sent, how the "hearings" are conducted when there is a violation written for an offender, as well as many other things. I have also been on the outside with a loved one on the inside. There is really no more of a helpless feeling than when a person has lost a loved one to prison. You are told that you can call FUMs, caseworkers, administration, Constituent Services, etc. with concerns. If a call is made you may or may not be told where they are. Sitting at home not hearing a word for days should not be the norm for families and friends of offenders. There needs to be some outside investigation into procedures that are followed or not followed, or that even exist, for things such as someone suddenly being placed in Administrative Segregation, taken to the hospital, any situation that makes it impossible for them to contact their loved ones. No one is required to notify the emergency contact or family members; there is just a sudden silence. Some staff will tell you, some staff will not. This needs to be addressed because it is torture for the ones outside and stressful for the offenders. These things need to be monitored, and changes need to be made to their policies. In summary, this bill is very important, and I hope to see it succeed and see changes happen within the Missouri Department of Corrections.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ANITA J SMITH</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/27/2026 2:30 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

Dear Members of the House Corrections Committee, please vote YES on HB 2695, HB 2751, and HB 2831. These bills would follow President Trump's First Step Act by incentivizing good behavior, education, and job training in prison by giving the federal standard for credit off a prison sentence when someone takes rehabilitative steps. This bill will help Missouri families get their loved ones back to work sooner, help taxpayers by saving money, and help correctional officers who are understaffed. I encourage you to visit a prison and talk to both incarcerated people and staff, and VOTE YES on HB 2695, HB 2751, and HB 2831. Thank you.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>CLIFFTON DAVIS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-590-1107</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MO JUSTICE COALITION</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>4608 DERBY RIDGE DR</b>		
CITY: <b>COLUMBIA</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65202</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>CONCERNED MOM</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/25/2026 3:18 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

I am writing to you regarding my son, [Son's Name], who is currently new to the correctional environment.

My son has struggled with alcohol for many years, beginning in college. This struggle led to a tragic accident in 2022 where he chose to drive and took someone's life. Following this, he was under the care of a counselor and was prescribed medication to help manage the severe depression resulting from his actions.

He has accepted his prison sentence and entered the facility with the goal of utilizing his time to actively work on his alcohol issues and overall rehabilitation. Given his history and his previous reliance on counseling and medication, I wanted to ensure that the appropriate staff are aware of his background so he can access the necessary support services while serving his time. My son is not stupid he has a bachelor's degree in nursing. However, alcohol worked on this career.

However, since arriving to his location he has slowly changed the attitude, of positive and acceptance, to no one cares.

1. He has signed up for classes to help with the alcohol but no one has responded to his request.
2. He has not been receiving any medication.
3. Has mentioned his concerns to his case manager and he has come to the conclusion that she really does not care.
4. He looks around the area that he has been in and says that the guards treat the end mates like they are scum.
5. The living quarters are really dirty and no one cares.
6. They have placed him in a location where no one cares. The inmates are high profile criminals. They do not want to improve themselves and they do not want anyone else to improve.
7. He has been threatened and fears for his life but does not want to be in the hole because he has no freedom. Therefore, he puts up with the threats and stays out of the inmates way. This leaves the perception of being killed or becoming one of them. So where is the rehabilitation? Guards don't

help; they have even laughed at some of the altercations.

8. He wanted to have a Bible to read so we ordered a Bible from Amazon and had it delivered directly to the prison, but he has not received the Bible and no one cares.

The prison world is not a good environment and the inmates control what goes on in their own little worlds. Please help in making the system more safe for inmates and create a system in which the ones who want rehabilitation can accomplish their goals.

Thank you for your time and for any guidance or assistance you can provide regarding the programs available to him.

Best regards,



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DEBBIE FEEBACK</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/24/2026 1:38 PM</b>	
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My testimony would be much longer than a statement. I have a son that has been incarcerated at Jefferson City Correctional Center for over 2 1/2 years. He was sent to DOC in May of 2023. There are a lot of things going on inside those walls that they do not tell the truth about. My son had a lot of insight. My son is currently going blind because of their lack of care. Has been found unresponsive in his cell on multiple occasions. While things have gotten a little better, it's only because he's been able to prove himself that he's not a junkie and that he does work a full hard days work, but there has to be oversight. There are a lot of people in Missouri, prisons and prisons across the country that there is corrupt activities. I would also love to sit on a board. I am a professional and yes, I have a son that is incarcerated. There is corruption in our prisons there is corruption in our courtroom rooms. There is corruption with attorneys and law enforcement. I have spent the last eight years fighting for people across our state due to the corruption and then now fighting for my son's life for the past 2 1/2 years. I don't go out public on social media or attend protests because I feel there is a better way to handle things but also because I don't want to cause him trouble. He has advanced to the honor wing and that makes it a little bit better for him. He does not get in trouble in there and we want to keep it that way because he won't have a choice but to protect himself if there is backlash. I can write out an actual statement if that's what you would like. I'm just providing a bit of information here I have so much that I could sit and answer in questions or provide data.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>DENA</b>	PHONE NUMBER: <b>417-260-2003</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>COLLECTIVELY CHANGING CORRECTIONS</b>	TITLE: <b>PRESIDENT</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>P.O. BOX 102</b>		
CITY: <b>ROBY</b>	STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65557</b>
EMAIL: <b>cccforchange24@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/24/2026 3:55 PM</b>

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Missouri has one of the worst prisons systems in the whole U S. , largely because they do whatever they want with no accountability. The results of this have been devastating. Abuse, neglect, unprofessional behavior and corruption are happening unchecked. And apparently the state is ok with shelling out millions of dollars in lawsuits to this utter embarrassment of a Corrections Department. Again, this is government waste and abuse. And the MODOC is making a mockery of the rest of the state government and ultimately reflecting badly on Mr. Kehoe, because he trusts them to investigate and govern themselves. We need change, something's got to give. You owe it to those who depend on the justice and penal system for their safety, security, rights and rehabilitation, to insist on accountability when they fail to do what they are entrusted to do.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>GLADYS COLLIS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/24/2026 4:31 PM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JAMES WYRSCH</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/26/2026 3:13 PM</b>
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I support creating an office of transparency and accountability in the MDOC — a body we should already have but do not. I especially support mandating oversight of access to substance abuse treatment in MDOC. MDOC is woefully failing to provide access to medication for opioid use disorder for its massive population of incarcerated people with opioid addictions.

Missouri law (RSMO Chapter 191, Section 1165(7)) requires meaningful access to medication for opioid use disorder in Missouri prisons and jails, including Suboxone. Yet DOC continues denying Suboxone to thousands, needlessly causing overdose and death.

I strongly support the creation of an office of transparency and accountability to hold MDOC responsible for providing all incarcerated people with Opioid Use Disorder access to the Medication for Opioid Use Disorder of their choice, such as Suboxone, which has been proven to save lives and prevent recidivism.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JERIKA WHITE</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-357-3236</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>EMPOWER MISSOURI</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>3407 S JEFFERSON AVE</b>		
CITY: <b>ST LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>63118</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KEVIN WALSH</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/24/2026 6:44 AM</b>	
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**This bill will prevent some cruelty.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>LEAH MARIE FESSLER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/26/2026 11:38 AM</b>

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I am testifying as a civil rights attorney who has spent over a year investigating Missouri DOC's Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Program, which was created to provide access to Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) to incarcerated people with OUD.

This bill must pass to ensure Missouri Department of Corrections begins following Missouri Law, RSMO Chapter 191, Section 1165(7), which explicitly requires MDOC to provide access to all three forms of FDA-approved Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD, or MAT) to all incarcerated people with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). Opioid Use Disorder is the leading cause of death for people under age 45 in Missouri, and it is overrepresented in Missouri's prison population, where at least 65% of incarcerated people live with a substance use disorder. MOUD, namely partial agonist medications and full agonist medications like Suboxone and Methadone, is the medical standard of care for treating OUD. This is not white glove treatment -- it's baseline care. MOUD is not replacing one drug with another. MOUD dramatically reduces recidivism and illicit drug use, enabling incarcerated people with OUD to recover from this chronic brain disease and focus on their rehabilitation, not their next fix of fentanyl or K2, which is extremely easily accessible in prison. As an attorney who has investigated Missouri DOC's MAT Program and is in touch with over 300 incarcerated people in MDOC with OUD, I am extremely confident that MDOC is not following the law and providing meaningful access to MOUD for all incarcerated people with OUD. Instead, MDOC is routinely forcing the vast majority of incarcerated people with OUD to take Naltrexone, which is a full antagonist medication and medically does nothing to control opioid cravings; Naltrexone has also made many incarcerated people extremely ill, causing extreme nausea, migraines, rashes, inability to eat, vomiting, weight loss, and worse. Thousands of incarcerated people are also experiencing months if not years delays in accessing any form of MOUD due to MDOC's failure to properly staff or train its MAT Program.

Missouri law requires meaningful access to all three forms of MOUD -- Suboxone/buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone -- without any arbitrary limitations on what kind of medication is available. Missouri Revised Statutes Chapter 191, Section 1165(7) reads as follows: "The department of corrections or state entity shall make available the MAT services covered in this section [which include access to Buprenorphine, Methadone, and Naltrexone], consistent with a treatment plan developed by a physician, and shall not impose any arbitrary limitations on the type of medication or other treatment prescribed or the dose or duration of MAT recommended by the physician." Missouri DOC's failure to provide timely access to MAT, and their contracted medical provider's insistence on only prescribing Naltrexone, patently violates this Missouri law and constitutes illegal, "arbitrary limitations on the type of medication" of MAT prescribed to people in Missouri DOC custody.

**HB1616 is necessary because it creates an office of transparency and oversight that will help ensure MDOC begins following the law and providing meaningful, timely access to MOUD for all incarcerated people with substance use disorders. I have spent a year legally investigating this issue and can testify with full confidence that without intervention, MDOC will continue violating the rights of incarcerated people with OUD, which is a disability protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Worse, by denying access to MOUD, MDOC will continue killing the people it is mandated to protect by allowing them to access a massive influx of opioids and other illicit drugs, overdosing, and dying, without any medical intervention. This must change. HB 1616 must pass.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>LYNN DEFRIES</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/24/2026 1:18 PM</b>
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The Department of Corrections needs to held accountable for everything going on. If someone goes in for a visit and they know, everything gets cleaned up and fixed. The facilities are falling apart and no one is being held accountable for this. The showers have black mold, the workers are bringing drugs in, the guards are being hired straight out of high school and have experience handling any kind of situation. When guards turn their backs so someone can go in a cell and beat someone up, not right. The guards have no empathy, yes they are inmates but they are also human. The food they are being fed now, I wouldn't feed to my dog. Please get this done and let's get the DOC cleaned up!



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARIA GOELLNER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>717-945-9089</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>FAMM</b>		TITLE: <b>VICE PRESIDENT OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>P.O. BOX 11</b>			
CITY: <b>ERIE</b>		STATE: <b>PA</b>	ZIP: <b>16512</b>
EMAIL: <b>mgoellner@famm.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 8:34 AM</b>	
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Thank you to Chair Mayhew, Vice Chair Cook, Ranking Minority Member Collins, and members of the Committee for considering this written statement in support of HB 1616 by Rep. Bill Allen (R-17).

My name is Matthew Charles. I was sentenced to thirty-five years in federal prison in 1996 for nonviolent drug offenses. I served 22 years before becoming a beneficiary of the First Step Act, signed into law by President Trump in 2018. I was the first beneficiary and was honored to attend the State of the Union address as President Trump’s guest in 2019. Since then, I have traveled the country speaking with state and federal lawmakers about my experience. I testify today on behalf of FAMM, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates sentencing and prison policies that are individualized, fair, protect public safety, and preserve families.

The Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC), the Christian Coalition, current and former correctional officers, FAMM, and many others support this policy. It would increase transparency and accountability in the Missouri state prison system by establishing an independent corrections ombudsperson’s office and a corrections oversight committee with power to receive and investigate complaints, inspect prisons, and recommend improvements.

This legislation will benefit Missouri correctional staff, incarcerated people, and families of both. The Missouri Department of Corrections (MDOC) is a very large agency with a \$935 million dollar 2026 budget. 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. Yet MDOC employs over 10,000 people, incarcerates 23,000, and affects an untold number through the ripple impact on the families of those who live and work in its 19+ facilities.

FAMM routinely gets reports of violence, abuse, neglect, understaffing, and lack of programming from correctional staff and incarcerated people. These reports cut through racial and geographic lines and emanate from the whole state. For instance, a hearing before this Committee recently revealed that the state pays \$212 million for prison health care, and yet deaths are not a performance measure of that health care. Missouri paid over \$66 million in lawsuit settlements and verdicts between 2020-2024 alone, according to a study by Empower Missouri . Families, taxpayers, and this Committee deserve transparency and accountability from this huge agency. This legislation is a way for the legislature and public to say, “show me.”

Missouri has a good roadmap for oversight legislation. In response to dire conditions in the federal

Bureau of Prisons (BOP), United States Congress passed the Federal Prison Oversight Act by 392-2 in the House of Representatives and by unanimous consent in the Senate. It became law in 2024. The bill was sponsored by Sen. Jon Ossoff and Rep. Lucy McBath with co-sponsors Sen. Mike Braun (R-Indiana) and Rep. Kelly Armstrong (R - North Dakota At Large). Every member of the Missouri Congressional Delegation voted for this oversight law, and it is in the process of being funded now and implemented now under President Trump's administration. It was supported by correctional staff, the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), Faith and Freedom Coalition, the National District Attorneys Association, and more. The Federal Prison Oversight Act contained two main provisions. First, it allows an independent Inspector General to conduct comprehensive, risk-based inspections of facilities. Second, it allows targeted investigations by the ombudsperson. These features are contained in this legislation. Further, President Trump has enacted H.R. 6936 as of January 2026, which directs the Department of Justice to establish the Ombudsman office, a key provision of the Federal Prison Oversight Act.

Americans understand the value of increased transparency and accountability in prisons. In a national poll, 82 percent of Americans agreed that every prison system should have independent oversight. Oversight can prevent expensive lawsuits and settlements paid for by taxpayers. It would also help lawmakers assess MDOC's budget and other needs more accurately. An independent ombudsperson could provide intelligence for the legislature, presenting unbiased, reliable, and accurate reports on the state of facilities and repairs, staffing needs, programming and food shortages, security risks, and dangerous conditions for staff and incarcerated people. This information could inform and guide lawmakers' choices about how to improve MDOC and ensure that it operates on a sound and sensible budget. Lawmakers need this steady feedback and insight to appropriately fund a large agency that is often opaque, in part because it is spread all over the state through thousands of employees.

Independent oversight benefits everyone it touches. Corrections staff deserve a safe, healthy work environment and need a place to go with complaints that, for whatever reason, are squashed, unanswered, or ignored by the administration. Incarcerated people have a constitutional right to a safe, healthy, humane prison environment and need a place to go when the prison grievance process breaks down, or they have no safe place to turn to for help. Families of incarcerated people need someone to call when they cannot get help for their loved one despite following all the rules. Oversight encourages increased professionalism at every level of an agency and has proven successful in several states, e.g. Indiana and Nebraska.

FAMM is happy to provide technical assistance and facilitate connections to ombudspersons in other states. We also encourage you to visit state prisons regularly and talk to both correctional staff and incarcerated people. Please reach out to [alex@csga.com](mailto:alex@csga.com), [mcharles@famm.org](mailto:mcharles@famm.org), and [mgoellner@famm.org](mailto:mgoellner@famm.org) or (717) 945-9089 for more information or to discuss this matter further.

Thank you for considering our views.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1616</b>		DATE: <b>2/26/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Corrections and Public Institutions</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MATTHEW CHARLES</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>615-428-8206</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>FAMM</b>		TITLE: <b>STATE LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS MANAGER</b>	
ADDRESS:			
CITY: <b>NASHVILLE</b>		STATE: <b>TN</b>	ZIP: <b>37208</b>
EMAIL: <b>mcharles@famm.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/27/2026 12:36 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

Thank you to Chair Mayhew, Vice Chair Cook, Ranking Minority Member Collins, and members of the Committee for considering this written statement in support of HB 1616 by Rep. Bill Allen (R-17).

My name is Matthew Charles. I was sentenced to thirty-five years in federal prison in 1996 for nonviolent drug offenses. I served 22 years before becoming a beneficiary of the First Step Act, signed into law by President Trump in 2018. I was the first beneficiary and was honored to attend the State of the Union address as President Trump’s guest in 2019. Since then, I have traveled the country speaking with state and federal lawmakers about my experience. I testify today on behalf of FAMM, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates sentencing and prison policies that are individualized, fair, protect public safety, and preserve families.

The Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC), the Christian Coalition, current and former correctional officers, FAMM, and many others support this policy. It would increase transparency and accountability in the Missouri state prison system by establishing an independent corrections ombudsperson’s office and a corrections oversight committee with power to receive and investigate complaints, inspect prisons, and recommend improvements.

This legislation will benefit Missouri correctional staff, incarcerated people, and families of both. The Missouri Department of Corrections (MDOC) is a very large agency with a \$935 million dollar 2026 budget. 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. Yet MDOC employs over 10,000 people, incarcerates 23,000, and affects an untold number through the ripple impact on the families of those who live and work in its 19+ facilities.

FAMM routinely gets reports of violence, abuse, neglect, understaffing, and lack of programming from correctional staff and incarcerated people. These reports cut through racial and geographic lines and emanate from the whole state. For instance, a hearing before this Committee recently revealed that the state pays \$212 million for prison health care, and yet deaths are not a performance measure of that health care. Missouri paid over \$66 million in lawsuit settlements and verdicts between 2020-2024 alone, according to a study by Empower Missouri . Families, taxpayers, and this Committee deserve transparency and accountability from this huge agency. This legislation is a way for the legislature and public to say, “show me.”

Missouri has a good roadmap for oversight legislation. In response to dire conditions in the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), United States Congress passed the Federal Prison Oversight Act by 392-2 in the House of Representatives and by unanimous consent in the Senate. It became law in 2024. The bill was sponsored by Sen. Jon Ossoff and Rep. Lucy McBath with co-sponsors Sen. Mike Braun (R-Indiana) and Rep. Kelly Armstrong (R - North Dakota At Large). Every member of the Missouri Congressional Delegation voted for this oversight law, and it is in the process of being funded now and implemented now under President Trump's administration. It was supported by correctional staff, the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), Faith and Freedom Coalition, the National District Attorneys Association, and more.

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Thank you for considering our views.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1616</b>		DATE: <b>2/26/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Corrections and Public Institutions</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ML SMITH</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-814-2910</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MO JUSTICE</b>		TITLE: <b>DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>6845 CREST AVE 1F</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63130</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SAGE CORAM</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-652-3114</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF MISSOURI</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>906 OLIVE STREET, SUITE 1130</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>SHARON GEUEA JONES</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-808-2156</b>
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI NAACP</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>227 JEFFERSON</b>		
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>TRINA MUHAMMAD</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/26/2026 1:02 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**I feel that good time in incarceration is very important and it also helps people work towards positivity while incarcerated due to fear of losing good time and having to remain incarcerated longer. Good time is a huge plus**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>WILL R KRUEGER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/26/2026 3:09 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

I am testifying as a civil rights attorney who has many clients whose families are impacted by incarceration, opioid use, and their associated harms.

HB 161 bill must pass to ensure Missouri Department of Corrections begins following Missouri Law, RSMO Chapter 191, Section 1165(7), which explicitly requires MDOC to provide access to all three forms of FDA-approved Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD, or MAT) to all incarcerated people with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). Opioid Use Disorder is the leading cause of death for people under age 45 in Missouri, and it is overrepresented in Missouri's prison population, where at least 65% of incarcerated people live with a substance use disorder. MOUD, namely partial agonist medications and full agonist medications like Suboxone and Methadone, is the medical standard of care for treating OUD.

This is not white glove treatment -- it's baseline care.

MOUD is not replacing one drug with another.

MOUD dramatically reduces recidivism and illicit drug use, enabling incarcerated people with OUD to recover from this chronic brain disease and focus on their rehabilitation, not their next fix of fentanyl or K2, which is extremely easily accessible in prison.

As an attorney, it is very troubling to me that MDOC is not following the law and providing meaningful access to MOUD for all incarcerated people with OUD. Instead, MDOC is routinely forcing the vast majority of incarcerated people with OUD to take Naltrexone, which is a full antagonist medication and medically does nothing to control opioid cravings.

Naltrexone has also made many incarcerated people extremely ill, causing extreme nausea, migraines, rashes, inability to eat, vomiting, weight loss, and worse.

Thousands of incarcerated people are also experiencing months if not years delays in accessing any form of MOUD due to MDOC's failure to properly staff or train its MAT Program.

Missouri law requires meaningful access to all three forms of MOUD -- Suboxone/buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone -- without any arbitrary limitations on what kind of medication is available. Missouri Revised Statutes Chapter 191, Section 1165(7) reads as follows: "The department of corrections or state entity shall make available the MAT services covered in this section [which include

access to Buprenorphine, Methadone, and Naltrexone], consistent with a treatment plan developed by a physician, and shall not impose any arbitrary limitations on the type of medication or other treatment prescribed or the dose or duration of MAT recommended by the physician." Missouri DOC's failure to provide timely access to MAT, and their contracted medical provider's insistence on only prescribing Naltrexone, violates this Missouri law and constitutes illegal, "arbitrary limitations on the type of medication" of MAT prescribed to people in Missouri DOC custody.

HB1616 is necessary because it creates an office of transparency and oversight that will help ensure MDOC begins following the law and providing meaningful, timely access to MOUD for all incarcerated people with substance use disorder.

Without change, MDOC will continue violating the rights of incarcerated people with OUD, which is a disability protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Worse, by denying access to MOUD, MDOC will continue killing the people it is mandated to protect by allowing them to access a massive influx of opioids and other illicit drugs, overdosing, and dying, without any medical intervention.

This must change. HB 1616 must pass.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCAT</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 11:32 PM</b>	

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I am Opposed to this Bill and yet Creating another Government Office spending \$500,000 or "Unknown" and Hiring New Full Time-Employees. We NEED to cut \$2-Billion Dollars from Our State's Annual Budget by F.Y.-2028. This Bill is a Duplication of existing Services and Oversight. There is currently a State Department of Corrections Inspector and Internal Affairs at all Prison Locations throughout the State. There are Promulgated Rules and Regulations, Federal & State Court Case Law, The F.B.I. United States Department of Justice, United States Attorney's Office and countless Agencies and Groups that watch and Advocate for the State Prisoners'.



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<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVO</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/27/2026 11:50 PM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>SARAH BERRY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 6:43 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

This notice is submitted to document foreseeable operational, security, and legal consequences of HB 1616 as drafted.

HB 1616 imposes a statewide oversight and transparency regime while simultaneously limiting the new Independent Office of Corrections and Transparency to two full-time employees. This mismatch between statutory duties and staffing predictably creates systemic failure conditions: investigative backlogs, incomplete inspections, inconsistent complaint handling, and uneven data collection. These foreseeable deficiencies risk producing either false assurance of “oversight” or unpredictable, nonuniform enforcement—both of which undermine public safety and institutional accountability.

HB 1616 also requires public disclosure of the names and email addresses of all applicants for Director of Corrections. This is foreseeably chilling, deters qualified candidates, invites harassment, and exposes applicants—especially internal candidates—to retaliation risk. The resulting candidate pool degradation is foreseeable and directly attributable to the bill’s disclosure mandate.

In addition, HB 1616 grants broad facility access, confidential communications, and photography/video authority paired with aggressive record-production timelines and subpoena power. Without tighter statutory guardrails, this structure foreseeably increases security risk, confidentiality disputes, and litigation over privileged records, ongoing investigations, medical/mental health information, and facility-security materials. The predictable result is increased administrative burden, higher legal costs, and delayed corrective action.

The General Assembly is hereby placed on notice that HB 1616, as written, foreseeably:

- chills recruitment for critical leadership positions,
- creates a structurally under-resourced oversight system prone to failure,
- increases security/privacy exposure and records litigation, and
- risks reputational harm through public findings without court-level process.

For these reasons, I urge opposition to HB 1616 unless amended to remove applicant doxxing, align staffing/resources with mandated duties, and add clear, enforceable security and confidentiality

**guardrails.**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>SARAH BERRY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/24/2026 1:32 PM</b>

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I rise in opposition to HB 1616 because it creates a new oversight structure that sounds noble in title, but is structurally unsound, legally risky, and destined to deepen distrust inside a system already under strain.

This bill establishes an “Independent Office of Corrections and Transparency” with only two full-time employees, yet grants sweeping authority: broad facility access “with or without notice,” confidential communications shielded from public records, and subpoena power over staff and documents.

That is not transparency—it is a parallel power center with a staffing level that cannot realistically investigate, verify, or manage the volume of complaints such a system will generate.

The bill also creates a committee and advocate structure that inserts politics into correctional oversight in a way that may increase conflict, not resolve it.

When oversight becomes performative—or when it lacks the resources to do its job fairly—the people who pay the price are the ones trapped in the middle: frontline officers, incarcerated people, and their families.

If this body believes reform is needed, then do it the right way: fund it adequately, define powers narrowly, protect due process for staff and incarcerated people alike, and ensure the public can evaluate outcomes with clear, auditable reporting—not a confidentiality wall that keeps the truth from Missourians.

Public safety is not served by building a fragile new bureaucracy with enormous authority and minimal capacity.

HB 1616 should not advance.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JOANNA PAGE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/26/2026 2:56 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

On behalf of Herbert Holman #326302 currently in Moberly Correctional Center with a release date of September 2026.

Mr. Holman was denied his medical information for over a year while at Crossroads Correctional Center in Cameron, MO. Labs were being drawn related to his Diabetes and Hypertension which have been lifelong diseases for him. He is currently on his 27th year being incarcerated in MoDOC, they were well aware of his conditions. We asked for the lab results over this year and we're denied being told. As a nurse myself, I knew by his symptoms he was entering kidney failure. We were still denied results or any change of treatment. He was having increased visual changes that lead to not even being able to read. He put in request after request for the eye doctor and was ignored every time. Policy is for all Diabetics to have annual eye exams and he had been denied having this exam for the last 5 years, even with his complaints of worsening site and fear of going blind. He was suddenly transferred to Moberly and we had no idea why. He dropped to a Level 1 so it didn't make sense why he went there. I immediately reached out to the Director of Nursing in Moberly and got all the lab results we had been previously denied. I was right. They were watching him rapidly go into kidney failure over the last year and they did nothing to help him or even notify him. She also informed me at that time that Moberly was the only institute in the state with on-site dialysis for all levels. He was sent there for dialysis when it was already to late to prevent or prolong and we have the proof in his medical records to show they knew. His labs continued to rapidly decline after his transfer in April 2025 to Moberly. Dialysis starts with a kidney function rate of 15. In May of 2025 he was at 19. This number dropped by 2 every 2-3 weeks and still nothing was being done. I became his legal DPOA had to obtain legal counsel, Michelle Carpenter from Saint Joseph, MO. After we were still denied medical records, she had no choice but to send a Preservation Letter on his behalf demanding evidence be maintained for an upcoming legal case. His body itself was the evidence. It was only then that he was seen by the eye doctor for his vision and was diagnosed with both Diabetic and Hypertensive Retinopathy with extensive damage due to not getting yearly exams that he was supposed to get. The doctor referred him to a Retinopathy Specialist the summer of 2025 and he has yet to see them or have any treatment for the Retinopathy. Her letter also made them respond to his kidney failure. They were again monitoring biweekly labs and watching the decline while doing nothing. When her letter was received, he started dialysis within a week. At that time it was October of 2025 and his kidney function was at a 7. He would have died within a month, maybe 2, had she not sent the letter. He has been in the hospital multiple times since October and starting dialysis. Each time has been for infected dialysis ports (the catheter used to perform dialysis that is placed in the upper chest/collarbone area directly into a central vein very close to the heart. They have not worn masks, which is a nursing board mandate for both the nurse and the patient to wear for all central venous line dressings, when changing his dialysis port dressings. They claimed

to have run out of face masks. An infection introduced at this central venous location carries the biggest risk of infecting the blood line directly to the heart. A medical facility should never run out of face masks that are needed for what they specialize in; multiple dialysis patients daily with these same central lines. I have read confirmed reports of 4 deaths in late 2024- early 2025 related to Moberly DOC dialysis patients that were from central line infections or caused by bleeding out from the insertion site. When I questioned these cases, their own Director of Nursing informed me of 1 other man who also bled out and resulted in death. She immediately started telling me the situation and how it wasn't their fault when I realized we were talking about two different situations and I wasn't even aware of the one she was talking about. It just made me question how many others have their been that the public doesn't know about? How many men have suffered because a loved one didn't know they can't investigate the death of an inmate or hold anyone accountable if they are not their made their DPOA while they are alive? How many of these injustices have just went away and gone unnoticed because they don't have anyone to answer to or accurately report deaths on a quarterly or annual basis? Why is nobody looking into the medical services for the Department of Corrections and ensuring legal and ethical codes as well as state regulations are being followed? These men went to serve their time for a crime...not to be tortured by a medical system that has no ramifications. Ive personally worked in a Level 5 camp as a nurse under Corizon. The things I have witnessed will never leave me. To put it in perspective after that being said, they were still better than Centurion. These men need your help, please!