



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2414		DATE: 4/8/2026	
COMMITTEE: Corrections and Public Institutions			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER: 314-440-9000	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCACY		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1535			
CITY: O'FALLON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63366
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/8/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: TAYLOR HAGENHOFF		PHONE NUMBER: 573-536-2554	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE LIAISON	
ADDRESS: 7729 PLAZA DR			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/8/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KORTNIE HUDDLESTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/8/2026 11:53 PM	

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I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB2414. While maintaining safety in our correctional facilities is a valid concern, this bill takes a misguided approach that prioritizes harsh punishment over genuine justice and rehabilitation. It will have devastating consequences for the very people our justice system should be trying to help. The most significant problem with this bill is its creation of a new class D felony for possessing a cellular phone or similar device in a correctional facility. Treating a cell phone as equivalent to a dangerous weapon is a profound overreach. In today's world, a cell phone is a lifeline. It is the primary way incarcerated individuals maintain contact with their families, especially their children. It connects them to legal resources and support systems that are critical for their mental health and successful reentry into society. Severing these ties does not make our communities safer; it makes them less safe by isolating people and increasing the likelihood they will reoffend upon release. This bill continues a failed policy of endlessly escalating penalties. Adding yet another felony conviction to a person's record does not solve the problem of contraband. It permanently harms that individual's chances of finding housing and employment after their sentence is complete, creating a permanent underclass. Instead of investing in effective strategies to prevent contraband, such as better screening technology for staff and visitors, this bill relies on the blunt instrument of the criminal law to punish individuals who are already under the state's complete control. The specific language in subdivision (4) regarding any item that "may be used" to endanger safety is dangerously vague. This could be interpreted to apply to countless innocent objects, giving correctional officers and prosecutors immense and unchecked power. This lack of clarity invites arbitrary enforcement and will inevitably lead to people facing severe felony charges for items that were never intended to cause harm. While the bill includes an expungement provision for some alkaloid violations, it is a hollow gesture. It explicitly excludes anyone who delivered or concealed the substance, which are the very people most likely to be targeted for prosecution. This does not represent meaningful reform or a pathway to redemption; it is a narrow exception that will apply to almost no one. True safety in our prisons and jails comes from humane conditions, adequate staffing, mental health services, and genuine opportunities for rehabilitation. This bill does nothing to address those root causes. It simply adds more punitive laws to the books, creating more felonies, destroying more lives, and doing nothing to build a just and equitable Missouri. We should be working to reduce the harms of mass incarceration, not inventing new ways to expand it. I urge you to vote no on this bill.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL DREYER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/8/2026 11:53 PM	

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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/8/2026 8:31 AM	

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This bill expands the offense of possession of unlawful items in a prison or jail to include unauthorized electronic communication devices and elevates that conduct to a class D felony.

While institutional security is a legitimate concern, this proposal raises serious issues regarding proportionality, fiscal impact, and overexpansion of felony-level offenses.

The bill does not merely prohibit conduct; it escalates it. By classifying possession of a communication device as a felony, the statute places nonviolent, non-assaultive behavior into the same tier of criminal exposure as more serious offenses.

This raises a fundamental question of proportionality.

Not every institutional rule violation warrants felony treatment, particularly where existing administrative and disciplinary mechanisms already exist to address contraband.

The fiscal note confirms that this expansion will increase incarceration and supervision costs, with projections escalating over time and the potential for far greater costs if prison capacity is exceeded.

The Department of Corrections explicitly acknowledges that continued growth in the incarcerated population may require expansion of facilities or even the construction of new prison capacity, with costs reaching into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

This bill therefore creates not only a new crime, but a long-term financial obligation tied directly to increased incarceration.

Additionally, the bill is drafted broadly. The definition of prohibited electronic devices includes a wide range of items capable of storing or transmitting information. Without careful limitation, this scope risks sweeping in conduct that varies widely in severity, while applying a uniform felony penalty regardless of context.

There is also no meaningful distinction drawn between possession and intent. The statute does not require proof that the device was used to facilitate criminal activity, escape, or harm.

Mere possession alone triggers felony exposure.

This disconnect between conduct and intent further underscores the concern regarding overcriminalization.

Legislative Notice:

Let the record reflect the following:

This bill expands felony liability to include possession of certain items without requiring a showing of intent to commit additional criminal conduct, thereby raising concerns regarding proportionality under constitutional principles governing criminal punishment.

The projected increase in incarceration, supervision, and potential capital expenditures implicates the state's obligation to manage correctional resources responsibly. Where legislation foreseeably contributes to prison population growth and associated costs, questions arise regarding sustainability and fiscal stewardship.

Additionally, the broad statutory language and lack of gradation in penalties may invite scrutiny as to whether similarly situated conduct is being treated in a manner consistent with principles of fairness and uniform application of the law.

For these reasons, I stand in opposition.