



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2832</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:
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>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>CLIFTEN DAVIS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-590-1107</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MOJUSTICE.ORG</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>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JERIKA WHITE</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-357-3236</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>EMPOWER MISSOURI</b>		TITLE: <b>CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY MANAGER</b>
ADDRESS:		
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>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.



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<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>MISSOURI JUSTICE</b>		TITLE:	
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>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>NANCY PRICE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 9:45 AM</b>

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Thank you for hearing this bill. While I agree with the concern of the committee that this could be an expensive and possibly redundant creation, I think the committee itself must ensure that that does not happen. That should be a priority for the members.

I believe we have a duty to both those who are incarcerated, their families and those who work with them. Having a place to have their concerns addressed, hopefully even before they reach crisis level, and having at least some faith that "the system" is hearing their concerns should be a way to decrease animosity between all stakeholders. When an inmate dies or suffers unnecessary negative consequences, emotions run strong and an effective intermediary would certainly help. This plan would also be a better conduit for sharing information on concerns, possible solutions, even from other states, and an overall perspective on the issues. Clearly defining the objectives and careful selection of personnel are essential to ensuring this is not just another expense.

I urge you to support HB2832. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>PRECIOUS JONES</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/25/2026 12:28 PM</b>	
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I am in support of this bill, there should have been a oversight board years prior. This a vital to inmates.



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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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<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 ST</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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<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>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 6:46 AM</b>	
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This notice is submitted to document foreseeable operational and legal harms of HB 2832 as drafted.

HB 2832 creates a DOC Ombudsman Office and Oversight Committee with unusually broad facility access, mandatory confidential communications, accelerated records-production timelines, and subpoena authority. As drafted, these powers foreseeably generate recurring disputes over privileged materials, ongoing criminal investigations, medical/mental health confidentiality, and security-sensitive facility information. These conflicts predictably increase litigation costs, delay corrective action, and divert staff resources away from core safety and operations.

HB 2832 also requires the Ombudsman Office to decline complaints when an inmate has not first used the department grievance system. This precondition foreseeably blocks review of high-risk matters where grievance mechanisms are inaccessible, ineffective, or feared due to retaliation—particularly for individuals in segregation, with disabilities, or reporting staff misconduct. The General Assembly is placed on notice that this structure predictably suppresses reporting and delays intervention until harm escalates.

Additionally, HB 2832 restricts Ombudsman staff/volunteers based on victim status and family relationships in a manner not narrowly tailored to conflicts of interest. This foreseeably reduces the qualified applicant pool and invites constitutional challenges and employment disputes unrelated to institutional safety.

For these reasons, I urge opposition to HB 2832 unless amended to (1) limit or remove subpoena authority for the legislative committee, (2) remove mandatory grievance exhaustion for Ombudsman investigations at least for serious covered issues, (3) replace categorical identity-based hiring exclusions with a tailored recusal framework, and (4) tighten confidentiality/security guardrails for reporting and records handling.