



July 8, 2019

Dear State Policymaker:

Every day in your district, families experience the incarceration of a loved one in a prison or jail, usually far away from home. And every day, more disturbing stories of life in prison or jail emerge: in Alabama, the U.S. Justice Department recently concluded that the level of violence, sexual abuse, and weapons in the men's prisons created conditions that violate the Constitution; in Florida and Texas, state-run prisons are not air-conditioned, resulting in heat-related deaths during summer; in Arizona, a federal judge ordered an independent monitor to review health care services in the state's prisons after numerous reports of neglect and abuse. Families expect their loved ones to be held accountable for their crimes, but they also expect their loved ones to serve their sentences in safe facilities that will help prepare them for a crime-free life after prison.

Too often, lawmakers simply don't know what prisons or jails are like – and they can't know, unless they go and see for themselves. Families with incarcerated loved ones believe lawmakers would support smarter justice reforms if they took the time to visit a prison or jail and see what it is like. FAMM agrees. **To that end, FAMM asks you to take the #VisitAPrison pledge and visit a prison or jail in your state within the next 12 months.**

Our hope is that by visiting a prison, you will learn first-hand whether conditions in your prisons and jails are safe and sanitary, whether educational and rehabilitative programs are offered to those who need them, and whether adequate meals and recreational opportunities are provided. It is also our hope that you will come to a better understanding of what families in your districts must endure when they have to travel to visit their incarcerated loved ones.

No prison system in this country is perfect, and running prisons is a difficult task. Visiting a prison is the best way for you to identify and understand the unique problems and challenges within your state's corrections system and develop effective policies that lead to rehabilitation.

If you've already visited a prison or jail, we applaud you and encourage you to take our pledge and go again. If not, make our challenge part of your first trip. **Attached is further instruction on how to take the #VisitAPrison pledge and share your visit with your constituents and colleagues.** Please feel free to reach out with any additional questions. I appreciate your time and consideration of our #VisitAPrison challenge.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Ring  
President