



February 2025 State Legislative Round Up

Welcome to 2025! Statehouses all over the country are officially beginning new legislative sessions. Lawmakers are introducing new bills every day, and we are reviewing them in our target states to see if they are helpful, hurtful, or neutral for our shared criminal justice reform goals. Legislative committees are getting to work and holding hearings.

This is one of the busiest times for FAMM state policy staff. We are preparing legislation, finding sponsors, preparing testimony, mobilizing families and incarcerated members, and hitting the ground running in many states. We are also readying our defenses because fighting bad bills will prevent unnecessary incarceration.

Here's your quarterly round-up of our state work, New Year edition. Don't see your state on this list? Don't worry. We have [resources for all 50 states](#) and want to hear from you to build the movement where you are. Join our Facebook groups or one of our regular State Policy Update calls or Advocacy trainings to get connected: <https://famm.org/for-families/>.

Alabama

Legislative session: February 4 – May 19, 2025

FAMM and state partners continue to highlight the need for truly independent prison oversight in the state. Our victory last year requiring corrections to communicate with families more was a first step. Alabama needs much more prison reform. We are also supporting second look legislation and looking for ways to increase the use of parole as a release mechanism.

Arizona

Legislative session: January 13 – April 23, 2025

FAMM and state partners are continuing to work on prison oversight and second look opportunities. We applaud the steps that Governor Katie Hobbs took toward prison oversight in 2023 and are working toward a permanent and independent oversight body. We are also building on last session's progress on early release from prison to home confinement, and other second look mechanisms.

Florida

Legislative session: March 4 – May 2, 2025

FAMM's state partner Florida Cares is proud to champion legislation called the "Long-Term Sentence Act" – a bill designed to create a fair and transparent parole system. Florida Cares is also leading efforts to establish an independent prison ombudsman office.



Illinois

Legislative session: January 8 – May 31, 2025

FAMM is continuing its work with lawmakers, state partners, families, and our incarcerated members to develop support for expanded second look mechanisms. One of these, the Earned Reentry bill, would allow people who have served 20 years to apply for release. We also support HB 1835 which makes certain 15-, 20-, and 25-year mandatory minimums for gun offenses discretionary. Similarly, we want to repeal so-called “truth in sentencing” laws, which require many people to serve an overly high percentage of their sentences. We are working to replace this with earned time credit for education, work, and programming participation. FAMM also supports independent prison oversight legislation in Illinois because better conditions benefit everyone.

Iowa

Legislative session: January 13 – May 9, 2025

FAMM is working to establish Iowa's first "compassionate release" law. Iowa remains the only state without such a law enacted. We hope to remedy this in 2025. We're also opposing new mandatory minimums and supporting second look laws.

Maryland

Legislative session: January 8 – April 7, 2025

Maryland's General Assembly is off to a quick start, with committee hearings being scheduled for some second chances legislation. We are happy to see medical and elderly parole listed for committee hearings early in the session, and we look forward to supporting these and other second chances bills as they move through the legislative process. There are also bills in both chambers seeking to make telephone calls free for incarcerated people in Maryland. FAMM is also excitedly following the staffing and implementation of the newly formed Office of Correctional Ombudsman under the leadership of Yvonne Briley-Wilson, Maryland's first correctional ombudsperson.

Michigan

Legislative session: January 8 – December 31, 2025

Win! Governor Whitmer signed HB 4173 and HB 4384, creating a sentencing commission in Michigan. The commission is tasked with studying the state's sentencing practices and providing recommendations to promote consistency sentencing. This legislative session, FAMM is continuing our work to improve sentencing practices in Michigan by partnering with state advocates to implement these new laws and also reform the use of overly harsh sentencing enhancement laws.

Missouri

Legislative session: January 8 – May 30, 2025

FAMM's has two main focuses in Missouri this year alongside state partners. The first is independent prison oversight. We strongly support HB 774 and HB 603 (introduced by a formerly incarcerated lawmaker) which would create an independent corrections ombudsperson office for the state. More in this

article: <https://missouriindependent.com/2025/01/21/missouri-lawmakers-push-for-oversight-panel-to-monitor-conditions-in-state-prisons/>. Second, we are working to

counter the many bad bills that would unnecessarily incarcerate more people through mandatory minimums or high time-served percentage requirements. These bills don't benefit public safety, and they hurt families. FAMM staff is meeting with lawmakers this month in Jefferson City.

New Jersey

Legislative session: January 14 – December 31, 2025

FAMM is very excited to see what Governor Murphy does around clemency after he signed the first round of grants late last year under his new clemency initiative. We are also following legislation around second chances and geriatric parole, and look forward to supporting these efforts this year in New Jersey.

Nevada

Legislative session: February 2 – July 28, 2025

Building on the testimony we provided to the legislature last year, FAMM remains committed to supporting second look legislation in Nevada. We are working with state partners and lawmakers to advance a second look bill that would provide individuals with the opportunity for a sentence review after serving part of their sentence.

Pennsylvania

Legislative session: January 7 – November 14, 2025 (two year session resumes in 2026)

We have seen a flurry of co-sponsorship memos of interest in Pennsylvania and are anticipating legislation to be introduced to address medical release, elderly release, felony murder, and a few other second chance topics. FAMM is excited to support these bills as they move through the legislative process! Unfortunately, we also anticipate a number of bad bills containing mandatory minimum sentences to be introduced. But, as always, we will be among the stakeholders in opposition.

Tennessee

Legislative session: January 14 – April 30, 2025

FAMM's top priorities in Tennessee this year include working with lawmakers and coalition partners to create more second look opportunities for elderly incarcerated people and those with medical issues. We also continue to advance independent prison oversight in the state of Tennessee and push for accountability at the Trousdale Turner Correctional Center. Finally, we are monitoring bad bills and playing defense to stop new mandatory minimums and over-sentencing provisions from passing.

Texas

Legislative session: January 14 – June 2, 2025

FAMM is working with state partners on multiple issues including: second look, compassionate release reforms, prison oversight, and parole reforms. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice will undergo "Sunset Review" this legislative session and we are hoping to leverage this opportunity to advance our core issues.

Virginia

Legislative session: January 8 – February 22, 2025

Win! This week, the Virginia legislature passed HB1955/SB888 by unanimous votes to eliminate the outdated sentencing disparity between the crack and powder forms of cocaine. The bills secured unanimous votes at every stop along the legislative process. The bill now goes to the Governor for his signature.

Washington

Legislative session: January 13 – April 28, 2025

FAMM is working on two important issues in Washington during the 2025 legislative session. First, we continue to support legislation to make retroactive a 2023 reform that eliminated the use of juvenile adjudications to automatically enhance a person's sentence in the adult justice system. Second, we strongly support legislation to give people convicted of an offense before their 21st birthday an opportunity for release after 15, 20, or 25 years depending on their underlying offense. We will keep our Washington FAMMily up-to-date as the session advances.