



March 12, 2026

Dear Lawmaker:

We write to urge you to please visit a prison facility in your jurisdiction and do so on a regular basis. In doing so, you will bear witness to the family impact of excessive sentencing policies and harmful prison conditions, including dangerous levels of both overcrowding and understaffing. To facilitate a productive and informative visit, we have developed a guide for lawmakers outlining key issues and questions to consider: <https://famm.org/vap-lm-guide/>.

FAMM is a nonpartisan, nonprofit sentencing and corrections advocacy organization. Our mission is to create a more fair and effective justice system that respects our American values of individual accountability and dignity while keeping our communities safe. We created this #VisitAPrison initiative because we believe that you “don’t know if you don’t go.” Informed policymaking requires firsthand engagement.

Prison visits help lawmakers better understand both the challenges within their jurisdiction’s prison system and the opportunities for improvement by increasing awareness of:

- Who is incarcerated in America’s prisons and jails and for how long;
- The daily living and working conditions experienced by incarcerated people and correctional officers; and
- The impact of incarceration on families as they seek to maintain meaningful connections with their incarcerated loved ones.

When lawmakers visit prisons, they are better equipped to identify and advance solutions to the policies and practices that contribute to strain and systemic failure. In facilities where people remain incarcerated unnecessarily, meaningful second look mechanisms and expanded compassionate release can help ensure that limited resources are used most effectively. In settings where chronic understaffing leads to prolonged lockdowns, limited programming, and unsafe conditions for both staff and incarcerated people, independent oversight can improve transparency, strengthen accountability, and enhance safety.

For 35 years, FAMM has been a national leader in advancing sentencing and prison policies that are individualized and fair, protect public safety, and preserve families. We stand ready to assist with policy solutions that strengthen prison oversight, advance strategic sentencing reform, and expand release mechanisms that recognize redemption, human dignity, and public safety as compatible—not competing—priorities. Contact [visitaprison@famm.org](mailto:visitaprison@famm.org) if you have questions or need assistance with the #VisitAPrison initiative. Thank you for your important service.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shaneva D. McReynolds, President