



Correctional Staff and Families of Incarcerated People Join Forces to Address Crisis in Nation's Prisons

Unprecedented Campaign Seeks to Improve Safety in Chronically Understaffed Prisons

WASHINGTON, D.C. – One Voice United, an organization representing correctional staff, and FAMM, an organization that represents incarcerated people and their families, announced a new “Safer Prisons, Safer Communities” campaign to raise awareness about and address unsafe conditions in America’s prisons. The two groups released a [short white paper describing the dangers caused by understaffing and overcrowding and areas for reform](#).

“It is time for our country to pay attention to what happens behind prison walls,” said Andy Potter, Founder and Executive Director of One Voice United (OVU). “For too long, corrections officers and those who are incarcerated and their families have been pitted against one another while the safety and wellbeing of our colleagues, friends, and loved ones has suffered.”

Last week, the U.S. Senate’s Judiciary Committee held two hearings on how the federal and state understaffing crisis was endangering staff and prisoners alike. According to [data](#) collected by The Marshall Project, the number of full time staff working in state prisons is down 10 percent since 2019 and now sits at its lowest level in two decades. In addition, some departments across the country have [vacancy rates](#) of more than 50 percent.

“Staffing shortages and overcrowding make it extremely difficult to ensure those who are incarcerated have access to adequate medical and mental health care and critical rehabilitative programming. Lockdowns caused by understaffing deprive families of visitations and communication with their incarcerated loved ones, weakening family ties,” said Daniel Landsman, Vice President of Policy, FAMM.

The “Safer Prisons, Safer Communities” campaign announced today identifies a handful of ideas that the groups will promote to policymakers at the state and federal levels, including: (1) improving the safety, health and wellness of prison staff; (2) increasing rehabilitation opportunities for incarcerated people; (3) increasing safety for community members; (4) increasing transparency and accountability for taxpayers; and (5) exploring ways to safely reduce the demand on our prison system.

“While it may be surprising to some people that we would work side by side, we have a shared goal of ensuring the health and safety of everyone who works and lives in our nation’s prisons. Communities will benefit, too, if our prisons have the staff and resources necessary to correct and rehabilitate and not simply warehouse,” said OVU’s Potter.



FAMM

About One Voice United

One Voice United is dedicated to elevating the voices of correctional officers and staff in national conversations about corrections and the criminal justice system. By building bridges and bringing together a broad range of stakeholders, we are cultivating a unified approach to the policies, programs and narratives that define criminal justice reform. We are working to shift the conversation from one that perpetuates tension between incarcerated individuals, corrections staff and budget constraints to one that is centered on protecting the safety and interests of all who are impacted by the corrections system.

About FAMM

FAMM's 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 do this by making sure people are treated equally and sentenced proportional to their offense; eliminating disparities based on race and ethnicity; ensuring people are incarcerated close to their homes in order to maintain important family bonds; and advocating for correctional facilities that are safe and humane, provide appropriate medical care, and offer educational, vocational, and rehabilitative programming.

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