



August 29, 2022

Arkansas State Representatives Fred Allen, Keith Brooks, Karilyn Brown, Andrew Collins, Denise Ennett, Ashley Hudson, Fred Love, Mark Lowery, Julie Mayberry, Tippi McCullough, David Ray, Jamie Scott, Joy Springer, and Carlton Wing

Arkansas State Senators Linda Chesterfield, Joyce Elliott, Jane English, Kim Hammer, Ricky Hill, Mark Johnson, and Clarke Tucker

Arkansas State Capitol  
500 Woodlane Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Pulaski County Arkansas Legislators:

Violent crime has increased in Central Arkansas, and the threats to our public well-being and safety are simply unacceptable. We need immediate action from the State of Arkansas, and we need your help.

You are invited to attend a presentation by Pulaski County and the Arkansas Association of Counties on Wednesday, August 31 at 11 a.m. in the Arkansas Association of Counties Building on 1415 W. 3rd Street in Little Rock. The presentation will address the urgent need for the State of Arkansas to budget necessary funds to the Arkansas Department of Corrections, so it can add necessary maximum-security beds for violent offenders and provide rehabilitation to inmates.

Currently, State prisons are overcrowded and backing up into county jails as a result. The Governor has had to repeatedly employ the Emergency Powers Act, which declares emergency overcrowding and allows inmates to be released before they have served their time. **This means felons, including violent offenders, are being released early after serving as little as a fifth or sixth of their sentence.** And due to the overcrowding of state inmates, county jails no longer have the room to house the local inmates they are designed to serve.

Pulaski County taxpayers alone pay about \$3.5 million a year for state prisoners housed in the county jail. As of the August 2022 local inmate cost report verified by Legislative Audit, each state inmate in the Pulaski County Jail costs the county \$71.29 per day. The State reimburses the County only \$40 per day, shirking its responsibility and forcing the county taxpayers to make up the difference.

With the facts before you, you have to wonder: if state prisons are overcrowded and violent offenders are serving only a fraction of their sentences, how is that impacting the public? The answer is in the recent news coverage of violent crime in Central Arkansas and the Arkansas Department of Corrections' latest recidivism rate of 46.1 percent.



In Governor Hutchinson's press conference last week, he asked you to consider additional funding for state prosecutors, public defenders, and another crisis stabilization unit. Those are all great long-term solutions to combat our state's increasing crime rate, and Pulaski County has a long history of investing in similar services.

However, I implore you to consider the larger piece of the puzzle. We desperately need an immediate solution to address the shortage of maximum-security beds in state prisons and consequently, the lack of necessary rehabilitation for inmates.

I sincerely hope to see you at our meeting this Wednesday. This is a public safety issue. This is an economic development issue. This is not a partisan issue. Let's work together to make this our top priority. Let's ensure when violent crimes are committed in Arkansas, the State has the resources to protect the public and provide adequate rehabilitation to offenders.

Thank you,

Barry Hyde

Pulaski County Judge

Doug Erwin

Lonoke County Judge

President, County Judges Association of Arkansas

Terry Hartwick

Mayor of North Little Rock

Jay Chesshir

President & CEO, Little Rock Regional Chamber

Scott Bradley

Director of the Arkansas Sheriffs' Association

Chris Villines

Director of the Association of Arkansas Counties

Mark Whitmore

Chief Counsel, Association of Arkansas Counties