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Nearly 40 Elected Prosecutors Pledge to Visit Their Local Correctional Facilities

DAs to Implement Officewide Requirements Promoting Greater Understanding of Conditions and Implications of Incarceration

LOS ANGELES – Today 39 elected prosecutors came together and committed to personally visit the correctional facilities in which individuals prosecuted by their offices are placed. Recognizing that “it is vital for prosecutors to understand the true impact of their decisions and to *see firsthand* the jails, prisons and juvenile facilities in their jurisdiction,” these elected leaders from around the nation have also committed to implementing requirements for *all* prosecutors in their offices to visit these facilities and to incorporate this concept into ongoing job expectations.

“Prosecutors control the front door of the justice system through their charging decisions -- and so much that follows in the lives of individuals in their community when that door is opened,” said **Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of [Fair and Just Prosecution](#)**. “As such, they have an obligation to see and understand the conditions in the jails and prisons where their advocacy sends people, as well as the impact of those decisions on the individuals incarcerated within their walls, their families and the broader community. Today’s pledge, joined in by a wide swath of prosecutors from around the country, seeks to embed in the culture of DAs’ offices the recognition that decisions to incarcerate someone should never be taken lightly. We hope that by bringing prosecutors closer to those impacted by their actions, they will have a new perspective as they weigh the decision to incarcerate against other options that will keep individuals in community settings.”

Despite the fact that prosecutors have immense influence over who becomes incarcerated and for how long, many have never set foot inside a prison, jail or juvenile correctional facility. As more prosecutors implement reforms to shrink the footprint of the justice system, it is critical to develop a deep understanding of correctional facilities – including an understanding of how isolated, dehumanizing and unsafe conditions can impact an individual’s rehabilitation efforts, and in turn the safety of the communities to which they return.

“As a veteran prosecutor who has been doing these types of visits for years, it’s encouraging to see a new generation emerging that is coming to terms with the weight of their power and taking steps to ensure they understand their impact on the lives of incarcerated individuals and their

families, not just theoretically, but in practice as well,” said Portsmouth, VA **Commonwealth’s Attorney Stephanie Morales**, one of the signators to the statement.

“Prosecutors routinely recommend prison sentences without fully understanding the conditions we are sending people into,” added King County (Seattle), WA **Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg**, another of the signators to the pledge. “We need to end our reluctance to look behind prison walls, and regularly engage with the men and women we have sent there in order to envision something better for them and for their communities.”

The pledge will be implemented by the participating offices over the coming year, during which time elected prosecutors, as well as all prosecutors in their offices, will complete visits to their local prison, jail and juvenile facilities, and implement ongoing requirements for their staff. This is a build out of the initiative launched by FAMM as part of their [#VisitAPrison challenge](#), an effort to encourage elected policy leaders throughout all levels of government to personally visit correctional facilities. For updates as the prosecutor pledge is implemented, including key takeaways from those visits, be sure to check in on FJP’s [Medium](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

Read the full pledge statement [here](#) and see below for a full list of pledge participants.

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Fair and Just Prosecution is a national network of elected prosecutors working towards common-sense, compassionate criminal justice reforms. To learn more about FJP’s work, visit <http://www.fairandjustprosecution.org/> or follow us on Facebook [@FairAndJustProsecution](#).

Pledge Participants

Aramis Ayala

State Attorney, Ninth Judicial Circuit, Florida

Diana Becton

District Attorney, Contra Costa County, California

Wesley Bell

Prosecuting Attorney, St. Louis County, Missouri

Buta Biberaj

Commonwealth’s Attorney-Elect, Loudoun County, Virginia

Chesa Boudin

District Attorney-Elect, City and County of San Francisco, California

Danny Carr

District Attorney, Jefferson County, Alabama

John Choi

County Attorney, Ramsey County, Minnesota

Shameca Collins

District Attorney-Elect, Sixth Judicial District, Mississippi

Scott Colom

District Attorney, Sixteenth Judicial District, Mississippi

John Creuzot

District Attorney, Dallas County, Texas

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District Attorney General, 20th Judicial District, Tennessee

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State's Attorney, Chittenden County, Vermont

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District Attorney, Salt Lake County, Utah

Joe Gonzales

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District Attorney, Kings County, New York

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District Attorney, Nueces County, Texas

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