

ADVOCACY GUIDE *for* FRANKLIN COUNTY

FOR AR
PEOPLE

YOUR VOICE MATTERS



Thank you for standing up for Franklin County and joining the effort to oppose the construction of a new 3,000-bed prison.

This guide provides simple, clear steps you can take to be part of this work. You don't need any special skills or experience to get involved — just a commitment to your community and a few minutes of your time each week. Let's get to work!

THE NUMBERS:



815

acres of land in Charleston
for a proposed prison site



3,000

prison beds that will be in
the facility



\$1.5

billion in taxpayer dollars
to build the prison



\$3,619

per acre the state spent to
purchase the land

STEP 1: KNOW THE ISSUE

Lack of Transparency: The state purchased land in Franklin County without informing the community and withheld information during the decision-making process.

Economic Concerns: The prison's cost is estimated at \$1.5 billion, far exceeding the \$400 million allocated. This will likely mean higher taxes or cuts to other services.

Workforce Issues: Local workforce and accessibility studies show this area is not suited for a large prison.

Community Impact: A prison could harm Franklin County's economy, environment, and quality of life.



PERSUASIVE TALKING POINTS:

Financial Mismanagement: Our state can't afford a \$1.5 billion prison when the allocated budget is only \$400 million. This shortfall could lead to tax hikes or cuts to essential services like education and healthcare.

Local Workforce: Studies have shown Franklin County doesn't have the workforce to support a facility of this size, which means more strain on our community.

Transparency and Accountability: The state purchased this land in secret without consulting the community. Decisions like this should involve the people who live here.

Community Values: Franklin County deserves development that uplifts our community, not a project that risks harming our environment, economy, and way of life.

STEP 2: SHARE YOUR STORY

LEGISLATORS AND THE PUBLIC CONNECT MOST WITH PERSONAL STORIES.



How will the prison affect your family, your business, or your community?
What makes Franklin Co. special & how would this project change that?

Write your thoughts down so you're ready to share them in meetings, letters, or public forums. You can also practice a 30 second "elevator pitch"—a couple of sentences to explain the problem and how you're working to solve it. It's also a good idea to have this written down so you can copy/paste it as a message to friends and family!

STEP 3: CONTACT JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As a bill, the Protect Arkansas Act went through each chamber's judiciary committee, which reviews matters like criminal procedures and prison reform. If any legislative changes are to be made regarding the prison project, it would likely go through these committees. These elected officials need to hear from you!

Familiarize yourself with committee members. Find contact information for members of each committee [here](#).



SENATE JUDICIARY

SENATORS:

- Alan Clark
- Tyler Dees
- Clarke Tucker
- Ben Gilmore
- Gary Stubblefield
- Matt McKee
- Terry Rice
- Blake Johnson

HOUSE JUDICIARY

REPRESENTATIVES:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| • Dalby, Carol | • Matthew Shepherd |
| • Jeremiah Moore | • Tippi McCullough |
| • Cindy Crawford | • Jon Eubanks, |
| • Matthew Brown | • Joy Springer |
| • Nicole Clowney | • Dwight Tosh |
| • Steve Unger | • Howard Beaty |
| • Andrew Collins | • Justin Gonzales |
| • Scott Richardson | • Ashley Hudson |
| • Brian Evans | • Jimmy Gazaway |
| • Shad Pearce | • Kendon Underwood |



CALL OR EMAIL

Calling is best but email works!

- **Introduce yourself:** Share your name, where you live, and that you're a constituent.
- **State your position:** Say you oppose the prison in Franklin County. Tell them why.
- **Be polite but firm:** Respect goes a long way, even if they disagree.
- **Follow Up:** If you don't hear back, it's okay to reach out again. Persistence shows you care. If they really ignore you, consider stating this publicly on social media and name the legislator.

A NOTE:

State legislators do not have staff. Contact info typically includes an email and a phone number. The number will either be a personal phone number or a legislator's office number at the Capitol.

STEP 4: ORGANIZE EVENTS

Creating physical events for people to show up and share is one of the most powerful ways to organize. And you've already done this when you hosted the town hall in November! Here's how to keep connecting people and keep the momentum going:



- **Coalition Meetings:** Ask people to join the Franklin County & River Valley Coalition to stay informed and connect with others. Consider hosting small get-togethers in your home or at a local business to work through organizing strategies and next steps.
- **Town Halls:** Host town hall meetings, like the one Charleston residents held in November, and invite legislators or state officials. Bring your questions and concerns. Get responses to your questions on record.
- **Legislative Sessions:** If you are able, travel to Little Rock with others to attend hearings or participate in a Lobby Day (more on this in a bit).

STEP 5: SPREAD THE WORD

Help others in your community get involved. You don't have to do this alone!

Talk to Friends, Neighbors and co-workers: Share what you've learned and invite them to join the coalition.

Use Social Media: Post updates, articles, events and meetings. Use a coalition hashtag, like #FranklinCountyStrong.

Circulate a Petition: Collect signatures to show widespread community opposition.



Most-Read AR Newspapers

1. Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
2. Southwest Times Record
3. Pine Bluff Commercial
4. Arkansas Times
5. Texarkana Gazette
6. The Sentinel-Record
7. Jonesboro Sun
8. NWA Democrat-Gazette
9. Log Cabin Democrat
10. Baxter Bulletin

STEP 6: ENGAGE THE MEDIA

Public pressure can sway decision-makers. Here's how to help:

Write a Letter to the Editor or an Op-Ed: Share your concerns with local newspapers. Keep it focused.

Invite Media to Events: Alert journalists to town halls, protests, or coalition meetings.

Share Your Story: Volunteer to speak with reporters or contribute to a news story. Most local journalists are eager to get good content!

STEP 7: LEARN GRASSROOTS LOBBYING

Lobbying is simply talking to decision-makers about what matters to you. You don't have to be an expert to do it. Plus, our lawmakers work for us. Anytime is a good time to speak with them.

Prepare Talking Points: Focus on 2-3 key reasons why you oppose the prison.

Join a Lobby Day at the Capitol: Travel with the coalition to Little Rock to meet with legislators. For AR People will provide training and support!

Speak at Committee Meetings: Share your story at legislative hearings when opportunities arise. At hearings, most policies decisions have already been made, but it's a great chance to state your position for the record. It also helps with public advocacy.



STEP 8: STAY POSITIVE + PERSISTENT

There are specific, practical, applicable, and measurable (SPAM) ways for you to stay engaged in advocacy. Most action steps can be done in a few minutes here and there — in the school pickup line, during a lunch break, when you get home from church, or right before bed.



**LET'S LOOK AT SOME
SPAM EXAMPLES NEXT.**





Here are examples of practical ways you can take action to implement this guide:

- Spend **5 minutes each night** inviting friends to join the Franklin County & River Valley Coalition's Facebook group.
- Write down your **personal story** about why you oppose the prison and practice sharing it with a friend or family member.
- Call a member of the **judiciary committee** during your lunch break and politely express your opposition to the prison project.
- Draft a short **letter-to-the-editor** piece and email it to five Arkansas media outlets.
- Brainstorm with a few organizers ways to host another **town hall** or coalition meeting. Set a goal to invite three people who have yet to participate.
- Post one article or update on your **social media** profile each week using the hashtags #StandWithUs_FCRVC and #FranklinCountyStrong
- Organize a **small gathering** at your home to discuss the issue with neighbors and share ways they can get involved.
- Participate in the next **Lobby Day** by signing up with For AR People.
- Practice delivering a **short testimony** using the talking points in this guide, so you're prepared for public hearings.
- Email us (info on next page) to request **additional training or materials** to help you feel more confident in your advocacy efforts. Change takes time, but your efforts can have a big impact. Keep these tips in mind:
 - **Stay Informed:** Follow updates and keep learning about the issue.
 - **Celebrate Wins:** Every small step forward is worth recognizing.
 - **Support Each Other:** This is a community effort! We're stronger together.

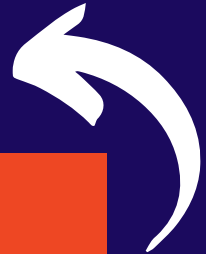
KEY CONTACTS:



[Franklin County & River Valley Coalition](#) (Click to link to Facebook Group)



[Legislator Contacts](#) (Click to link to page or scan QR with phone camera for full list):



**SCAN CODE FOR
ARKANSAS LAWMAKERS CONTACT LIST**



[For AR People Team:](#) We are here to help you every step of the way! Whether you need guidance, resources, or training, our team is available to provide free support to help you make a difference. To connect with someone who can help you or to learn more about upcoming events and opportunities to get involved, please reach out!



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REMEMBER...

You don't have to be a professional activist to make a difference. Your voice, your story, and your commitment to Franklin County are powerful tools for change. Together, we can protect our community and hold decision-makers accountable.

Thank you for stepping up and speaking out. For AR People is here to help every step of the way. We're a community-focused, nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering everyday Arkansans to advocate for what matters to them. Whether you're just starting or ready to dig deeper, we provide tools, training, and support to make your voice heard. Let's get to work!