



The Correctional Association of New York, John Howard Association, and Pennsylvania Prison Society applaud the first steps of Arizona Oversight Commission and echo the call for more resources to realize and sustain critical oversight.

Commission Sought Support From IL, NY & PA Prison Oversight Organizations

January 16, 2024

In recognition of the need to “improve transparency and accountability of Arizona’s corrections system,” Governor Hobbs [created an Independent Oversight Commission](#) by executive order in January 2023. In establishing the commission, Governor Hobbs took an important step in recognizing the fundamental role that oversight plays in creating system transparency and effecting meaningful and lasting change in prisons.

Acknowledging the scale of problems in Arizona’s corrections system and the role oversight can play in addressing them, the commission sought technical support from our three organizations.

Since 2020 the nation’s three independent prison oversight organizations, [The Pennsylvania Prison Society](#), [the John Howard Association of Illinois](#) (JHA) and the [Correctional Association of New York](#) (CANY), have collaboratively developed and promoted good practice.

Our three organizations provided hands-on support to the commission during their monitoring visit to the Tucson State Prison Complex in October 2023, guiding the organization, implementation, and follow up for this visit. We were pleased to demonstrate and share oversight practices with the Commission, and applaud the openness of the members in recognizing that correctional oversight requires specific competencies and has a unique impact.

Our three organizations endorse the recommendation in the [commission’s preliminary report](#) for lasting solutions that “would require dedicated funding and staffing to accomplish meaningful and credible work.” As Commission member and Arizona House Representative Analise Ortiz stated “[This commission really needs to have full-time staff, and full-time commitment and money behind it.](#)”

In Arizona and throughout the United States, there is an urgent need for sustained and well-funded correctional oversight. While examples of robust correctional oversight mechanisms are scarce, the ongoing success of our three organizations and other entities operating within constrained budgets underscores the potential impact of effective oversight.

Further promising developments have emerged with the recent establishment of Ombuds offices in Virginia and Connecticut, along with a proposed bill for [federal prison oversight](#). Using lessons learned from the work undertaken by the Commission in 2023, Arizona is well positioned to demonstrate to the nation the value and impact of this crucial work by implementing sustained correctional oversight right now.

**For more information on the three-state collaboration please contact Aidan King:
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