

Calling your legislator—talking points for family members

My name is _____ and I live in _____ (neighborhood or address.)

I'm calling you because my _____ (son/brother/father/husband/uncle) is in Tamms C-MAX prison in downstate Illinois.

I am part of a group called "Tamms Year Ten" and I want you to know about the conditions at Tamms, and to ask for your help in changing this situation (or closing this prison down).

Do you know that at Tamms:

(Name any points specific to Tamms that are most important to you.)

- All prisoners are in permanent solitary confinement. They are kept alone 24 hours a day.
- Solitary confinement causes men to break down both psychologically and physically. It is a form of torture.
- They do not permit any phone calls and this makes it very hard for the family.
- It is difficult for our family to visit because the prison is so far away, and because of the administrative hassle they put us through.
- Tamms is supposed to have a one-year behavior modification program, after which men will be released back to the regular population—but they aren't letting the men out.

(Describe the effect on your loved-one and your family.)

- My _____ has been there for _____ years.
- This kind of treatment breaks people down—men are going insane there.
- I want these men to be treated like human beings.

Please help us end these policies—the state of Illinois should not be torturing our family members.

Will you attend the hearings of the House Prison Reform Committee of the Illinois General Assembly at the James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph, in Chicago? April 28 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

May I meet with you and give you more information about Tamms?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

NOTE: If you do not talk directly to your legislator, you must ask that your representative return your phone call—ask for a call-back This forces them to listen and to process your information.

TIPS

1. This is just a guide. Say what is most important to you in your own way.
2. Be courteous even if they seem like they don't care about the issue. The facts may eventually convince them, but it might take time!
3. If they are convinced, ask how they can help raise awareness or change Tamms.
4. Write down everything they say. It will be helpful for the campaign to know what the objections are and where we have support.
5. Please let us know who you have contacted and what they say. (yearten@riseup.org) (Nadya: 773.241-4155)

Calling your legislator—talking points for concerned citizens

My name is _____ and I live in _____ (neighborhood or address.)

I'm calling you because I am concerned about what I have learned about the conditions at Tamms supermax prison in Southern Illinois. I have joined of a grassroots group called "Tamms Year Ten" and we are working to change conditions in Tamms.

I want you to know about the conditions at Tamms, and to ask for your help in changing this situation or closing this prison down.

(Add whatever points specific to Tamms that are most important to you.)

- All prisoners in Tamms are kept in permanent solitary confinement.
- This place was built for short-term incarceration, but one third of the prisoners at Tamms have been there since the day it opened, ten years ago.
- Solitary confinement causes many men to suffer psychological and physical breakdowns.
- This costs \$90,000 a year per prisoner to torture people. Why?
- This is bad public policy—it serves no purpose.
- I want these men to be treated like human beings.

Please help us end these policies—I do not want the state of Illinois to spend my money this way.

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