



Blue Ribbon Commission
A Hearing on the Correctional Staff Wellness Crisis
May 13th, 2022, in Washington DC

Purpose: Shed light on a wellness crisis that is not seen by most Americans; government, regulators, legislators have all failed to provide oversight. And, give officers and staff the opportunity to tell their stories.

Hearing Format: In a Congressional-style hearing, Commissioners will be seated with testifiers in front of them and with an audience behind the testifiers. There will be two rounds of testimony from individuals who have first-hand experience and expertise with the issues within the corrections profession. Following each round, a set of the Blue-Ribbon Panelists will be given 2-3 minutes to respond to what they have heard. We will record the Blue-Ribbon Hearing (testimony and responses) and use it as a report to further push forward this critical work.

Panel 1: I Am Not Okay

First-hand accounts and experiences featuring Stephen Walker, Bryanna Mellen, William Young, and Milagros Brown

Panel 2: Another way is Possible

Understanding the mental/physical wellness implications on staff and looking toward a better future, featuring Dr. Michael Pittaro, Dr. Caterina Spinaris, and Tor Erik Larsen

Blue Ribbon Commissioners: The distinguished panel of Blue Ribbon Commissioners include people with national standing who are not in the correctional workforce. The panel includes those whose titles, words of affirmation, networks, spheres of influence and commitment to work towards officer wellness will demonstrate the strength of our alliances and partners, inspire officers and staff and add much needed momentum to our movement.

(List in formation)

Ken Dalley, Founder, Chairman and Chief Warrior of Guardian RFID
Juan Gomez, Co-Founder and Executive Director, MILPA Collective
Mary Kay Henry, International President, Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Darielle Kennedy, Chair, Student Senate, Oberlin College
Julie James, Vice President of Criminal Justice, Arnold Ventures
Rev. Terrence Melvin, Secretary Treasurer, NY State AFL-CIO
Brianna Nuhfer, Vice President of Criminal Justice, Stand Together
David Pitts, Director of the Prison Research & Innovation Initiative, Urban Institute
Dr. Lisa Puglisi, Asst Professor of Medicine at Yale
Amanda Ripley, New York Times Best Selling Author and Investigative Journalist
David Safavian, Director, American Conservative Union Foundation
Dr. Nneka Jones Tapia, Managing Director of Justice Initiatives, Chicago Beyond
Barbara Weinstein, Associate Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism