

# SUPPORTING MATERIALS PACKAGE

## Truth in Prison Staff and Administrative Reporting Act (TIPS Act)

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### 1. BACKGROUND & NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Across the United States, investigations, federal reports, and litigation have revealed recurring failures in correctional systems related to inaccurate, falsified, or incomplete reporting by staff. These failures are not isolated—they reflect systemic vulnerabilities in oversight and accountability.

#### Key Findings from Documented Cases & Reports:

- Federal correctional officers have been **charged and convicted** for assaulting inmates and falsifying reports to conceal misconduct ([AP.com](#))<sup>1</sup>
- In a high-profile federal case, officers **falsified required monitoring logs**, contributing to unsafe conditions preceding an inmate’s death ([Department of Justice](#))<sup>2</sup>
- Department of Justice findings show that **failure to conduct required checks and properly document inmate status** contributed to numerous inmate deaths across facilities ([DOJ Office of Inspector General](#))<sup>3</sup>
- Investigations have uncovered instances where staff **falsified logs claiming routine checks**, while video evidence showed no such checks occurred prior to inmate suicides ([Cronkite News](#))<sup>4</sup>
- Oversight bodies have found that internal investigations into misconduct are often **inadequate or lack independence**, allowing misconduct to go unaddressed ([NJ.gov](#))<sup>5</sup>

#### Key Findings from Virginia Specific Documented Cases & Reports:

- At a federal prison in Petersburg, Virginia, a lieutenant and a nurse **failed to provide medical care to an inmate in distress**, who later died. Both individuals **were convicted of making false statements to federal investigators** during the investigation. The court found the conduct involved: Deliberate indifference to medical needs; Attempts to mislead investigators after death. ([Department of Justice](#))<sup>6</sup>
- The same case (above) resulted in prison sentences for staff who: Failed to act during a **30-hour medical crisis**; Then **lied to investigators about what occurred**. ([Department of Justice](#))<sup>7</sup>
- At Rockbridge Regional Jail, a head nurse **was convicted of falsifying documents** to interfere with a federal civil rights investigation. The falsified record claimed an inmate **refused medical care**. ([Department of Justice](#))<sup>8</sup>
- At Wallens Ridge State Prison, an inmate was found dead with a fractured Adam’s apple and visible injuries. A corrections sergeant was **terminated during the investigation**. ([Corrections1](#))<sup>9</sup>
- At Marion Correctional Treatment Center, a family alleged an inmate died from a beating. Officers denied wrongdoing, and the case centered on **conflicting accounts of what happened**. ([Corrections1](#))<sup>10</sup>

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### 2. HUMAN IMPACT STATEMENT

Behind every inaccurate report is a human consequence.

Families of incarcerated individuals often rely entirely on official accounts to understand what happened to their loved ones. When those accounts are false or incomplete:

- Deaths may be mischaracterized or obscured
- Accountability is delayed or denied
- Families must pursue costly legal action to uncover the truth

- Trust in the justice system is eroded

In documented cases:

- Inmates have died after staff failed to perform required safety checks, while reports falsely indicated compliance
- Some deaths have been linked to **neglect, excessive force, or delayed medical response**, later contradicted by evidence
- In certain jurisdictions, allegations persist of coordinated efforts to **conceal misconduct through reporting practices**

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### 3. PROBLEM STATEMENT (VIRGINIA FOCUS)

Virginia, like many states, relies heavily on internal reporting and internal investigations within its Department of Corrections.

Challenges include:

- Limited independent oversight of staff-generated reports
- Barriers for inmates and families seeking evidence or review
- Potential conflicts of interest in internal investigations
- Lack of standardized accountability mechanisms for falsified reporting

The absence of strong statutory safeguards increases the risk that misconduct may go undetected or unaddressed.

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### 4. WHY CURRENT LAW IS INSUFFICIENT

Existing laws address misconduct broadly but fail to specifically target:

- **Material falsification of correctional reports**
- **Systemic patterns of reporting misconduct**
- **Failures to report known misconduct (“code of silence”)**
- **Independent, external review mechanisms with enforcement authority**

Additionally:

- Enforcement is often inconsistent
- Investigations may rely on the same systems being scrutinized
- Data transparency is limited

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### 5. HOW THE TIPS ACT SOLVES THE PROBLEM

The TIPS Act introduces a comprehensive framework:

#### **Accountability**

- Criminal penalties including perjury and obstruction of justice
- Enhanced penalties for patterns of falsification

#### **Independent Oversight**

- Establishes an Independent Review Unit (IRU) with subpoena power

#### **Transparency**

- Requires public reporting of misconduct data

#### **Prevention**

- Mandatory evidence preservation (video, logs)
- Duty-to-report requirements for all staff

#### **Investigative Integrity**

- Required cooperation in investigations
- Use of credibility assessment tools (administrative context)

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### 6. BENEFITS TO VIRGINIA

#### **Public Safety & Trust**

- Strengthens credibility of correctional institutions
- Builds public confidence in oversight systems

### **Protection for Ethical Officers**

- Shields honest staff from association with misconduct
- Breaks harmful “code of silence” dynamics

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

- Reduces costly litigation and wrongful death settlements
- Prevents federal intervention due to systemic failures

### **Federal Alignment**

- Positions Virginia to align with federal civil rights enforcement priorities
  - Supports eligibility for federal funding tied to correctional reform
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## **7. STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT STRATEGY**

The following groups are key to building support:

- Families of incarcerated individuals
  - Former correctional staff willing to speak on integrity issues
  - Civil rights and legal advocacy organizations
  - Faith-based and community justice groups
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## **8. TRAVIS WILLIAMS’ PERSONAL IMPACT STATEMENT:**

“I never expected that trying to report misconduct would make me a target.

Since filing complaints about staff neglect and mistreatment, I have experienced retaliation by means of intimidation, denial of privileges, obstruction of grievances, and ongoing fear for my safety. I’ve had medical restrictions ignored, personal property damaged or withheld, and my ability to communicate with my family severely impacted.

The hardest part has been feeling completely voiceless — like the system designed to protect people from abuse was instead being used to silence me. Every complaint I filed felt like it disappeared behind closed doors.

I live every day knowing that speaking up can bring more retaliation, but staying silent allows these practices to continue, not just against me, but against others who are afraid to come forward.

This petition is bigger than my personal experience. It’s about accountability, truth, and making sure no one inside a correctional facility is stripped of their humanity simply because they are incarcerated.

I am asking people to stand with me in demanding transparency, independent oversight, and real consequences for falsified reporting and abuse inside our prison system.”

— Travis E. Williams

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## **9. REQUEST TO LEGISLATORS**

We respectfully request:

- A primary sponsor for the TIPS Act in Virginia
  - Co-sponsors committed to correctional transparency and accountability
  - The opportunity to meet and present this proposal in detail
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## **10. ATTACHMENTS**

- Full Bill Text (TIPS Act)

- Executive Summary
  - Supporting Case Documentation, expanded
  - Virginia Specific Supporting Case Documentation, expanded
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