EXHIBIT C2

Opening Statement

Thank you, Chair Clark and Chair Dalby members of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Marshall Clement, and I am the director of the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization. We work with state and local leaders to design solutions to complex criminal justice challenges by providing trusted data and practical solutions, and by building collaboration across branches and levels of government. Over the past two decades at the CSG Justice Center, I've had the honor of working closely with policymakers in more than two dozen states to closely analyze their justice systems and design data-driven and research-backed changes to lower crime, recidivism and correctional costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony as you consider ways to address the challenges facing Arkansas's criminal justice system in the upcoming legislative session.

For more than ten years, our team at the CSG Justice Center has been honored to work in partnership with Arkansas policymakers, justice system leaders, and stakeholders. Together we have analyzed your state's data, examined research and proven practices, and studied examples from other states to help design strategies that improve public safety here in Arkansas. Several pieces of enacted legislation have grown out of that work, including most recently Act 670 in 2025. As a result, Arkansas has a strong policy architecture upon which to now scale and accelerate implementation efforts.

Today we are pleased to summarize our key findings, along with the challenges and opportunities Arkansas faces at this moment. I have prepared a presentation that distills our analysis into the main points the state must weigh to improve public safety and justice.

The challenges are significant. Arkansas has a higher violent crime rate, a higher recidivism rate, and a higher incarceration rate than most other states. Arkansas is projecting a significant increase in your prison population while other states are seeing their prison population decline. Our analysis nonetheless gives two reasons for optimism.

First, over the last 10 to 20 years, most other states have made meaningful progress in reducing violent crime, incarceration, and recidivism. This has meant greater public safety, lower costs for taxpayers, and a more effective justice system. Arkansas can achieve these kinds of results as well.

Second, Arkansas's high violent crime rate is not currently the primary driver of its high incarceration rate. This means the state can pursue two strategies at the same time. It can free up prison bed space by making better use of community corrections centers, expanding that capacity, and reducing recidivism and revocations. It can also invest in solving more of the state's violent crime while preserving prison capacity for people convicted of serious violent offenses.

As other states have seen, the result would be more justice for victims of violent crime, more opportunity for people after they have served their time, and lower recidivism and lower costs for taxpayers.

Thank you. I would be glad to walk you through the presentation, answer any questions, and look forward to continuing to support you as you work to improve safety and justice in Arkansas.

Marshall Clement

Marshall Clement serves as the director of the CSG Justice Center, providing strategic leadership to advance the organization's mission of strengthening public safety, improving justice systems, and supporting state and local leaders nationwide. For 20 years at the CSG Justice Center, Marshall has played a key role in shaping many of the organization's impactful initiatives. As director of the State Initiatives Division, he led an initiative to partner with policymakers in 27 states to develop data-driven policies that reduce corrections spending, lower recidivism, and enhance public safety. His expertise in criminal justice policy, data analysis, and bipartisan collaboration has helped inform policy and practice changes across the country. Throughout his career, Marshall has facilitated high-level policy discussions, worked closely with governors, legislators, and justice system leaders, and testified before legislative committees to drive evidence-based solutions. His commitment to trusted data, practical policy, and meaningful partnerships continues to guide the CSG Justice Center as it works to be the most trusted, useful, and impactful partner for state and local leaders working on advancing safety and justice. Marshall holds a BA in public policy with honors from Brown University.