

BARRY COUNTY: **FIX YOUR SH*T**

A CLUTCH JUSTICE CAMPAIGN · LETTER TEMPLATE FOR BARRY COUNTY RESIDENTS

How to use this letter: Fill in every blank, delete any checked ask that doesn't apply, add your own story if you have one, then mail or email it to your commissioner. Find your district and their contact info on the directory on the last page. Keep a copy. If you don't get a written response within a reasonable time, follow up in writing and say so publicly.

Your Name

Street Address

City, MI ZIP

Date

Commissioner Name (see directory, last page)

Barry County Board of Commissioners, District _____

Mailing or email address (see directory)

Dear Commissioner _____:

I am a resident of Barry County, District _____, and your constituent. I'm writing about how our courts and jail actually work, and about the law enforcement facility project your Board just moved into preconstruction.

Before this county asks me for another dollar, in taxes or in a millage, I want to know that the system that fills our jail is being run honestly, documented completely, and held to the same standard it holds everyone else to. Specifically, I'm asking you to:

- ☐ **Uphold and document plea bargains.** Commit to honoring negotiated plea agreements, and to keeping a complete, public record of every plea offered, accepted, and rejected, so families and the public can see whether promises made in court are promises kept.
- ☐ **Fix the court's record-keeping.** Ensure that dockets, hearing transcripts, and case files are complete, accurate, and reasonably accessible to the people they govern. A resident should not have to fight for a copy of their own record.
- ☐ **End railroading.** Guarantee that decisions affecting someone's liberty, custody, or family follow full, fair process, not administrative shortcuts justified as efficiency.
- ☐ **Stop destroying families quietly.** Acknowledge, publicly and in writing, the real cost that court and jail decisions have on children, spouses, and households, instead of treating that cost as someone else's problem.
- ☐ **Show your work on the jail project.** Release the underlying jail population data, the projection model and its assumptions, what alternatives to incarceration were actually modeled, and a line-by-line

reconciliation of how the project's cost estimate moved from roughly \$51.2 million to roughly \$35 million, before any millage question goes to voters.

I'm not asking you to take my word for any of this. I'm asking you to put the county's own records where the public can see them, and to answer for what those records show.

Optional: add your own story here, in your own words, if you have one.

I expect a written response, and I expect it to answer the specific questions above rather than restate that the current jail is old. I'll be watching for it, and so will my neighbors.

Sincerely,

Signature

Printed Name

Phone or Email (optional, for their reply)

BARRY COUNTY COMMISSIONER DIRECTORY

Find your district, then send your letter to that commissioner. Not sure which district you're in? Ask your township or city clerk, or check your voter registration card.

Commissioner	District	Contact
Bob Teunessen	1	BTeunessen@barrycounty.org
Catherine Getty	2	(269) 953-3151 · cgetty@barrycounty.org
David W. Jackson (Chair)	3	(616) 437-0296 · djackson@barrycounty.org · 5395 Guernsey Lake Rd., Delton, MI 49046
Jon Smelker	4	(616) 765-8481 · jsmelker@barrycounty.org · 7101 Buehler Rd., Freeport, MI 49325
Mike Callton	5	MCallton@barrycounty.org
Marcia A. Bassett	6	MABassett@barrycounty.org
Bruce Campbell	7	(269) 838-7350 · bcampbell@barrycounty.org · 5131 S Broadway Rd., Hastings, MI 49058
David Hatfield (Vice Chair)	8	dhatfield@barrycounty.org

Source: Barry County Board of Commissioners roster, barrycounty.org. Verify current contact information there before mailing, as officials and addresses can change.

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