Dear Members of the Missouri Supreme Court,

For the past several months, law enforcement officials across the state have reached out with significant concerns about the changes that have been made to pre-trial release standards, which have reduced judicial discretion and threaten to significantly reshape our justice system.

Now, individuals who are potentially dangerous or have a history of failing to appear for court are being released on recognizance – with no conditions at all – because the rules that went into effect in July make it too difficult for judges to impose bail. This has led to suspects re-offending while awaiting trial, including one of the individuals involved in October's deadly Tequila KC mass shooting.

The problems that have been brought to our attention are not just teething problems, they are a sign that these rules simply are not working as intended.

In trying to address what are very serious problems confronting a small number of courts across the state, these new rules have instead placed a significant burden on all our courts. The Court overstepped by adopting such a broad package, and we strongly encourage you to rescind these rules and instead work with the legislature to adopt a responsible, narrowly-tailored set of changes meant to improve the judiciary.

There are other, less far-reaching changes that could be adopted to improve our criminal justice system, including:

- Limiting bail for minor offenses
- Ensuring courts are required to hear bail appeals in a timely manner
- Making sure no individual can ever be detained pre-trial for longer than the likely length of their potential prison term

We would be honored to have the chance to work with the Court on these reforms and others, but first we encourage you to rescind the flawed rules that went into effect just months ago so we are not working from a flawed starting point.

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