

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Colette Peters
Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First St., NW
Washington, DC 20534

Attorney General Garland and Director Peters,

We write to express our strong opposition to the reported transfer of convicted felon Robert R. Courtney to a Community Corrections Center (CCC), also known as a halfway house, home confinement, or any attempt to release Courtney before he has served his full term in prison.

As you know, Courtney, a former pharmacist who practiced in Kansas City, was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment after admitting to diluting at least 72 different drugs, including cancer treatments. Over the course of almost a decade, this violent fraud is estimated to have impacted 4,200 patients under the care of 400 doctors. As many of 98,000 prescriptions are believed to have been diluted under his “get rich quick” scheme that stole countless loved ones from Kansas City-area families far too soon.


It has been reported that Courtney’s victims have been notified that Bureau of Prisons has approved his transfer to a CCC in Springfield, Missouri on June 20, 2024 and will be transferring Courtney to home confinement on July 31, 2024. When the Department of Justice considered transferring Courtney to home confinement in 2020, a decision we also strongly opposed, it was reported that the decision was made because of concerns about his health and because he is at “minimal risk of recidivating.” It should be noted that Courtney had no such concern for the health of the patients under his care.


Robert Courtney’s violent crimes were heinous—as the heart-wrenching victim impact statements enclosed detail. To this day, it’s difficult to find anyone in the region that hasn’t been impacted, who didn’t have a family member, friend, or loved-one stolen from them too soon by Courtney. Through fraud and deceit, he stole precious time from so many. The damage he inflicted on those who trusted him for medical care through his wanton acts of violence for personal gain is immeasurable.

As penance for his crimes Courtney should serve no less than the entirety of his sentence behind bars. The decision to transfer this individual fails to fully consider the public safety ramifications of his transfer and the impact that the transfer will have on his victims.

We ask that the Department of Justice provide an explanation of its decision to transfer Courtney and strongly urge that the Department and the Bureau of Prisons reconsider his transfer.

Sincerely,


Sam Graves
Member of Congress


Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

Enclosed: Victim Impact Statements

Victim Impact Statements

The below victim impact statements are copied from excerpts provided in *United States v. Courtney*, No. 02-4083 (8th Cir. Apr. 5, 2004). The United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit explained that these are only a glimpse of many more victim impact statements shared by the direct victims of Courtney's crimes.

"Being diagnosed with ovarian cancer and dealing with the fact that you may not be around to see your kids grow up [is hard enough] without having to deal with someone doing this to you. The fear alone is indescribable. You wonder[,] if you would have gotten the medication you were supposed to have[,] if your cancer would have come back or not."

"I have suffered worry, stress[,] and extreme anxiety concerning the recurrence of the disease after the initial period. Would the disease have 'come back' if the initial treatments had been full dosage? We'll never know! I have felt intense anger and related stress from the knowledge of Courtney's deliberate wrong doing directly related to me. Will I be able to conquer this disease or have his actions reduced my odds in any fashion[?] Will my life be shortened by this crime?"

"Emotionally, it has affected me the most. It is a very hard thing to deal with. I lose my self control and cry when I think of Courtney – how he would take someone's life for money."

"Lots of sleepless nights. Lots of stress not knowing what [w]as done to my body. If Gemzar had been a regular chemo (not diluted)[,] I wouldn't have pancreatic cancer on my liver now."

"This crime takes hope away that the treatment was effective and has created doubt. I feel like I have lost peace of mind because I worry about future occurrences of cancer and if I will receive the correct dosing of medicine."

"When I was diagnosed with cancer, I discovered I had to fight an emotional battle as well as a physical one. During this time, I tried to accept that I had a very dangerous set of cells invading my body. Early last fall, I discovered I had another force invading my body. This was one I hadn't counted on. I had to face the reality that someone had purposely diluted the drugs going through my body. I have no idea how it affected my disease, but I felt violated – I felt raped."

"I saw [the doctor] in February of 2001 and began chemo treatments of Taxol and Carboplatin immediately. Because I had responded favorably to these two chemo drugs previously, it was only natural to expect the same response. Unfortunately my health worsened and in March I had to resign from my position [at work]. [The doctor] decided to try a different treatment using Gemzar, but it still didn't improve my situation at all. It wasn't until August of 2001 when I was told I had received diluted chemo drugs from Mr. Courtney's pharmacy that it all made sense why my health was failing. I feel as though my family has been short changed. I feel my whole future has been taken away from me."