



## LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

121 Mystic Avenue, Suite 9  
Medford, Massachusetts 02155  
T: (781) 393.6985

April 2, 2020

California Governor Gavin Newsom  
State Capitol, 1st Fl.  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

As you know, public health officials are warning that COVID-19 transmission in correctional facilities poses a potentially catastrophic risk to prisoners, staff, and communities across our state. We applaud your decision to release those with dates in the next 60 days. We have watched governors take further action on this issue in [Colorado](#) and [New Jersey](#). Tragically, efforts in New York are coming too late, as [Rikers Island](#) is already facing an unmanageable crisis. As current and former police, judges, prosecutors, and corrections officials, we are writing to urge you to **issue an executive order** to tackle this challenge. A sample executive order is attached to illustrate our recommendations.

There is strong public support for dramatically reducing jail and prison populations to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Sixty-six percent of likely voters, including 59% of those who identify as “very conservative,” said that elected officials should be considering measures to reduce populations in prisons and jails as a response to coronavirus.<sup>1</sup> Criminal justice leaders are already taking action to safely reduce correctional populations.<sup>2</sup>

It is challenging for our cities and counties to respond effectively to this crisis, since it requires so many different agencies to coordinate. Our justice system needs state-level guidance in order to act swiftly, properly allocate resources, and minimize casualties.

We write to you as the sole actor with the authority to achieve system-level results with clarity, consistency, and vision. We suggest three steps you could take right now to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in correctional facilities and beyond:

1. **Release medically high-risk people in state custodial facilities.** We urge you to use your clemency powers to begin a process of immediate review and presumptive release for all people identified by the CDC as particularly at-risk – older people and people with underlying health

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<sup>1</sup>Fighting the Coronavirus with Decarceration: Policies and Polling, Data for Progress (March 2020) Accessed at <https://www.dataforprogress.org/memos/fighting-coronavirus-with-decarceration>. (March 16, 2020 to March 17, 2020, survey of 2509 likely voters.)

<sup>2</sup> "Jails Release Prisoners, Fearing Coronavirus Outbreak - WSJ." 22 Mar. 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/jails-release-prisoners-fearing-coronavirus-outbreak-11584885600>. Accessed 23 Mar. 2020.



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conditions or who are otherwise immune-compromised – whose sentences would end in the next two years and who do not pose a significant public safety risk.

2. **Reduce overall populations in state custodial facilities.** Using your clemency powers, begin a process of immediate review and presumptive release for:
  - a. anyone incarcerated for technical violations of probation or parole, and/or
  - b. anyone whose sentence would end in the next 180 days.
  
3. **Reduce medically high-risk and overall populations in local custodial facilities.** Direct local stakeholders, including police, prosecutors, and judges, to take concrete steps to reduce the intake of people into local custodial facilities. These steps would include:
  - a. stopping arrests for low-level offenses and issuing citations in lieu of arrest for other offenses,
  - b. suspending the use of cash bail and limiting pretrial detention to cases with a significant risk of flight or charges indicating high risk of violent reoffending, and
  - c. setting conditions of release that allow incarcerated people to care for family at risk for COVID-19.

The time for action is now. This pandemic is here, and – if it hasn't already – it will make its way into our state's carceral facilities. Attached to this letter is a draft Executive Order that you could sign to immediately to address this crisis head-on.

Sincerely,

Officer David Doddridge (Ret.)  
Los Angeles Police Department, CA

Sgt. Cheryl Dorsey (Ret.)  
Los Angeles Police Department, CA

Lt. Diane Goldstein (Ret.)  
Redondo Beach Police Department, CA

Former Special Agent David Long  
US Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General  
San Francisco, CA

Yvette McDowell  
Assistant City Prosecutor (Ret.)  
Pasadena, CA



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Lt. Col. Arthur Rizer (Ret.)  
Military Police Corps  
U.S. Army National Guard  
Former Assistant US Attorney  
Southern District of California

Erroll Southers  
Former Assistant Chief of Homeland Security and Intelligence  
Los Angeles World Airports Police Department, CA

Sgt. Carl Tennenbaum (Ret.)  
San Francisco Police Department, CA

Enc. [Executive Order](#): Controlling COVID-19 Transmission and Mortality by Reducing Certain  
Populations in State and Local Custodial Facilities