



**LAW ENFORCEMENT
ACTION PARTNERSHIP**

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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

April 14, 2020

Governor Ned Lamont
State Capitol
210 Capitol Ave.
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Lamont:

Thank you for leading the country with a strong, proactive COVID-19 response in Connecticut. You have been a brave advocate for taking effective precautions that are greatly benefiting people across the state. Having served Connecticut as police officers, we wish to commend you in particular for the Department of Corrections [releasing over 700 people from prison](#). We agree that the public safety benefits of releasing these people far outweigh any public safety risk.

We urge you to further reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in correctional facilities by **increasing the populations considered for release**. Transmission between prisoners, officers, and staff will quickly spread outside the facilities to the families of officers and staff, accelerating the pandemic. We have watched governors act on this issue in [Colorado](#), [Oregon](#), and [Kentucky](#). 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 address this risk. 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.¹ Criminal justice leaders are already taking action to safely reduce correctional populations.²

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.

¹Fighting 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.)

² "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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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 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 it has made 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,

Chief Robert J. Hoffman (Ret.)
Plainfield Police Department, CT

Captain Lawrence Hunter (Ret.)
Waterbury Police Department, CT

Officer Sean Perez (Ret.)
Hartford Police Department, CT



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Major Neill Franklin (Ret.)
Maryland State Police
Executive Director, Law Enforcement Action Partnership

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