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Soha Saiyed
President

Michael Aldridge
Executive Director

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Deputy Director

December 6, 2021

Tom Wine
Commonwealth Attorney

Judge Angela Bisig
Chief Judge, Jefferson Circuit Court

Mike O'Connell
County Attorney

Judge Annette Karem
Chief Judge, Jefferson District Court

CC: Greg Fischer, Mayor
Dwayne Clark, Jail Director, Louisville Metro Department
of Corrections

To the concerned parties,

Three people have died in Louisville Metro Department of Corrections (LMDC) custody in just the past week, shining a violent light on the abhorrent conditions in the city's jails. The conditions are dire and untenable for both incarcerated people and corrections officers. These conditions are fueled by overcrowding created by a broken cash bail system and the failed war on drugs.

Many people held in LMDC are incarcerated simply because they cannot afford to post bail. As of October 26, 74% of people currently held in LMDC facilities are there pre-trial. Of those, less than half are being held for alleged offenses considered violent, and some are being held for bonds under \$500.

This crisis is shocking but not surprising – the system is working as intended. We routinely overincarcerate people in this state and in this country, and poor communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by these practices.

We are seeking immediate relief for the people suffering in Louisville Metro Department of Corrections and demanding Commonwealth Attorney Tom Wine and Jefferson County Attorney Mike O'Connell immediately stop requesting bench warrants with cash bonds for anything other than alleged offenses that present a legitimate threat to community safety. We are also demanding LMDC enforce its current contract with Wellpath Medical services to support people with substance use disorder. Affordable and accessible treatment must be part of the solution to our commonwealth's substance use disorder crisis, not incarceration.



We have also written to Mayor Fischer's office requesting the city return to its past practice of issuing citations for low level offenses rather than arresting and detaining people.

We would like to meet Thursday, December 9, 2021, to hear your plans to address the crisis in our jails and your response to these demands. Please be in contact with Angela Cooper by Wednesday, December 8, 2021, by close of business date at angela@aclu-ky.org or 502.654.8227.

Sincerely,*

ACLU of Kentucky
The 490 Project
The Bail Project-Louisville
The Kentucky Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression
Father Patrick Delahanty
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Fairness Campaign
Louisville Family Justice Advocates
Black Lives Matter Louisville
SisterSong Kentucky
Louisville Community Bail Fund
Armed and Educated
Mama Bears of Beecher
Stand Up Sunday
Jewish Community Relations Council, Louisville
Stand Up Sunday
BLML Reproductive Justice
Louisville Showing Up for Racial Justice Campaign Team
Abolition Apostles

*These organizations signed on with very short notice. We expect others will wish to sign on as well.