Dear Speaker Pelosi, House Minority Leader McCarthy, Senate Majority Leader McConnell and Senate Minority Leader Schumer:

Statement of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated People Regarding the Urgent Funding Needed for Survival.

The United States is at the beginning of a pandemic, the scope of which this country has not experienced in at least 100 years, if ever. The CDC has issued urgent guidance telling people to stay home, wash their hands, keep six feet away from other people, and disinfect surfaces to keep the number of infected people from overwhelming our health care system. These warnings are not being implemented for 2.5 million incarcerated people – those locked in America’s prisons, jails, and immigration detention centers. As formerly incarcerated people, we have experienced the challenging living conditions and inadequate healthcare systems within jails and prisons. We hear every day from people still on the inside that conditions are getting worse. At Aliceville FCI in Alabama, the prison staff is complaining that they have no disinfectants or cleaning products, while the BOP spokesman announced that everyone has everything they need. In a women’s state prison in Pennsylvania, sick people are wandering around the units with masks. At the FCC Coleman Camp in Florida, the women became ill after being exposed to the infectious Legionella bacteria, the source of which has not been found. If the coronavirus infiltrates Coleman, the 350 people there face a high risk of death. These are just a few of the many reports coming in across the country.

Our prisoner and detained migrant population is being forced to engage in highly risky behaviors: living in crowded conditions with no access to cleaning supplies, no decent medical care, no support from loved ones, and not even basic information about what is happening. The people in our prisons are part of this country. They are our grandparents, parents, children, siblings, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Half of the people in the United States know someone who is, or has been, incarcerated. The prison population is aging, immune-compromised, and chronically ill. Many of those detained in immigration detention centers are family units that include children and elderly folks. Congress cannot forget them.

But most importantly, the coronavirus does not respect prison walls. Stopping all visitation, ordering lockdowns, and other measures that will make incarceration harder to endure for those on the inside, will not stop these facilities from becoming breeding grounds for illness. Prison
staff, vendors, ambulance drivers, and, yes, coroners will carry the virus back to their homes and communities. Ignoring the impact of the coronavirus on prisons threatens us all.

The only way to prevent this pending disaster is for Congress to require the BOP, ICE, ORR and CBP to grant a medical furlough or compassionate release to anyone who is 1) high-risk or 2) becomes ill.

In the meantime, we ask that the following support be provided to incarcerated people and those who are ill due to incarceration:


2 According to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, 21.5% of the federal prison population is over 50 and 6.7% is over 60. https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/quick-facts/BOP_May2019.pdf


- Funding for an emergency release program, including support for transportation home, living stipend, and access to health insurance;
- Funding for food stamps, food, housing vouchers, or hotel rooms for those returning home
- Funding for tests and needed medical supplies directed toward the prisons and jails;
- Funding to local hospitals and medical facilities to care for incarcerated people; Requiring this funding to be contingent upon hospitals agreeing to provide care for all individuals, regardless of legal status.
- Funding for funerals and other death-related costs for the families of those who die while incarcerated;
- Funding for community groups that will assist elderly and sick people who are released and returning home;

Lastly, as we are one community, the family members and loved ones of incarcerated people are struggling through this pandemic. Many of these households are in need of support to better understand the steps being taken to protect their incarcerated loved ones, as well as support for their own households. Many have been laid off and have no cash to purchase food and the now limited items in supermarkets necessary to feed children no longer attending school, and other necessary cleaning and daily living supplies.

The community organizations that are on the front lines working to help cash poor families survive during this difficult time also need support. We ask that support be provided to community-led organizations working to assist incarcerated people and family members of the incarcerated. These community first line organizers need cleaning supplies, canned and other food, blankets, paper goods, and temporary relief from monthly expenses such as payment of rent, electricity and office internet and phone services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed deep systemic inequities. For too long, we have relied on the criminal legal system as a catch-all response to social problems, trapping our most vulnerable residents, breaking up families, and destroying lives.
In this moment of crisis, we have an opportunity to take immediate action that will protect all of us from infection in the short-term and improve our shared quality of life in the long-term. Now is the time to disinvest from the criminal legal system and invest in permanent public health infrastructure that includes healing, housing, healthcare, treatment including comprehensive harm reduction services, and community-led economic development projects as a step toward healing and justice.

Sincerely,

Formerly incarcerated individuals, families, and organizations led by formerly incarcerated people.

**ORGANIZATIONS**

A Little Piece of Light  
A New Way of Life / All Of Us Or None  
A Womans Worth Project Inc  
ACLU-NM  
Alabama Justice Initiative  
All of Us or None  
All of Us or None, Charlotte Chapter  
All of Us or None, St. Louis Chapter  
All of Us or None, Texas  
Ardella’s House  
Bard Prison Initiative  
Beauty after the Bars  
Before, During, and After Incarceration (BDAI)  
Beyond Rosies  
Black & Pink  
Black & Pink, Boston  
Black & Pink, Providence  
Black Lives Matter DC  
Blind Justice Legal Services  
Boston College Law School  
Byp100 DC  
California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP)  
California Families Against Solitary Confinement  
Californians United for a Responsible Budget Coalition (CURB)  
Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (CFSY)  
Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ)  
CAN-DO Foundation  
Carter Lizzy  
Center for Community Alternatives  
Center for Justice  
Center for Rational Justice Studies
Change Comes Now
Charm City Care Connection
Circle for Justice Innovations
Civic Trust Public Lobbying Company
Coalition for Women Prisoners NYS
College & Community Fellowship
Colorado African American Drug Policy Coalition
Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)
Community Defense of East Tennessee
Community Unity in Action
Connecticut Bail Fund
Context Mitigation
CT Bail Fund
Department of Education
DGBessRecovery
Dignity & Power Now
Dream Deferred
Droplwop coalition. Curb.
E&D ENTERPRISE, LLC
East Bay Community Law Center
Empower DC
Empowerment Behavioral Therapeutic Services
Essie Justice Group
Everybody Has A Story
exalt Youth
EX-incarcerated People Organizing (EXPO)
Faith In Action East Bay
Families for Justice as Healing
FAMM advocate
Fatima Speaks LLC
FIPR
FirstFollowers
Flikshop
Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates Network
Formerly Incarcerated Convicted Peoples and Families Movement
Forward Justice
Free Hearts
Freedom Overground
FTB
Germantown Participatory Defense Hub
Google
GREENHOOD
Hands of Hope Outreach Ministries, INC.
Heartland Alliance
Heartland Zen
Henry Street Settlement
Homies Unidos
House of Dreams ReEntry Consulting, LC
Incarcerated Children's Advocacy Network (ICAN)
Interfaith Medical Center
International CURE
International Prisonwatch
Inviting and Exciting
Justice For Families
Justice Roundtable’s Directly Impacted People’s Working Group
Justice Strategies
Justice Support Group
#keepalefree deportation defense campaign
Kensington Paticipatory Defense Hub
La Defensa
La.Parole Project
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
Let’s Get Free: Women & Trans Prisoner Defense Committee
Life After Release
Life for Pot
Live Free National at Faith in Action
Loyola University Maryland
LPA
LYJSENTENCINGEXPERT
Madison Event Group
Maine Youth Justice
MANN UP
Massachusetts Against Solitary Confinement
MAXINE MIMMS ACADEMIES
McGrath House
Melinda's Malarky Blogger
MFP, New Mexico
Mi. Liberation
MileStone Creations
Mommieactivist and Sons
National African American Families First and Preservation Association (@NAFPAorg)
National Participatory Defense Network
New Beginnings Reentry Services, Inc
New Mexico Coalition for Fair Sentencing of Youth
New Person Ministries
Nibezun
No Exceptions
North Carolina Community bail fund of Durham
Northwest Community Bail Fund
Ohio organizing collaborative
Once INcarcerated...Once INc...
Operation Restoration
Oregon Justice Resource Center (OJRC)
Parole Preparation Project
Participatory Defense
Participatory Defense Hubs
Participatory Defense MontCo
Participatory Defense Movement Nola (PDMNola)
PB&J Family Services Inc.
Philadelphia Participatory Defense- Hub Volunteer
Phillips
Pillars of the Community
PLAN-Mass Liberation Project
Positive Women's Network-USA
Prevention at the Intersections
Prisoners Legal Services
Project Prosper of Florida
Project Rebound, California State University-Fullerton
Re:Store Justice
ReEntry Matters
Reform LA Jails
Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP
Reproductive Justice Inside
Resilience Orange County
Restore Justice Foundation
Reuniting Family Bail Fund
RG Travel Services
Rising Sun Ink
San Mateo County Participatory Defense
Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos
School Justice Project
Silicon Valley De-Bug
Sills Family Foundation
SisterHearts, Inc.
Sisters Unchained
Southerners on New Ground
State Vs Us Magazine
Strategic Philanthropy, Ltd.
Supporters of Incarcerated People (SIP)
SWOP BEHIND BARS
SWOP-USA
TailorMade2020
Talk2mefoundation
The Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration (CADBI)
The Fortune Society
The Graduates Rising
The Grande
The Justice Collaborative
The National Council For Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls
The National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens
The Real Cost of Prisons Project
The Tadini House
To Defend if Necessary
TRANScending Barriers
Triumphant 2Gether
Tulane University
UMass Law
Unapologetically HERS
Underground Scholars UCRIVERSIDE
Unheard Voices Outreach
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action
United Congregations of Metro-East
United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS)
University of Arizona
University of California San Francisco
Urban Peace Movement
VACSFY
Vanderbilt Prison Project
Virginia Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Youth
Virginia Prison Justice Network
Voice of the Experienced (VOTE)
W.H. Burns Institute - CJNY
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
We are better together Warren Daniel Hairston project
WE GOT US NOW
West Philadelphia Participatory Defense Hub
West Philly Participatory Defense Hub
What’s Next Washington
Wisconsin Supporting Incarcerated People
Witness to Mass Incarceration
Women Who Never Give Up, Inc.
Women Against Mass Incarceration
Women on the Rise GA
Worth Rises
Yale Law School
Young Women's Freedom Center
Youth Justice Project

INDIVIDUALS
A Grice
Abdul Ali
Adrianna Harvey
Adrienne Aiken
Akeem Sims
Alberto Rivera
Aleah Bacquie Vaughn
Alejandra Pablos
Alelur Duran
Alex Andrews
Alexander Hall
Alexandria Pech
Aliya Donn
Amanda Goode
Amber-Rose Howard
Amika Mota
Aminah Elster
Amy Ralston Povah
Anais Sensiba
Andrea Hudson
Andrea James
Andrew Cevasco
Angel Tueros
Angela Antoine
Angela Henderson
Angeline Montauban
Angelique Evans
Anisah Sabur
Aniya Wiley
Ann Knoedler
Annabelle Parker
Annetta Starr
Annette DeRouen
Annie Phoenix
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Anthony Luther
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April Stafford
Ariel Goode
Ashlee Sellars
Ashley whittemore
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Ausettua AmorAmenkum
Ayana Aubourg
Bain
Barbi Brown
Barry Anderson
Basil Hackworth
Benee Vejar
Beth Curtis
Beth Ostmann
Betsy Brill
Bianca Tylek
Brandon Caldwell
Breanna Diaz
Brenda Kroener
Brett Davidson
Bridget While
Brittany Ryswyk
Brittany White
Bruce Reilly
Bruce Schmiechen
Caitlin Schnur
Cammie Carl
Candace Johnson
Carlos Polanco
Carma Houston
Carol Corey
Carole Eady
Carole Nolan
Caroline Friedly
Cassandra Bensahih
Catherine Jones
Catherine Lambert
Cathy Hall
Cecilia Chavez
Chanel Rhymes
Charisse Domingo
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Charlie Sullivan
Chelsea Lee
Chelsea Yarborough
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Christine Clifford
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Crystal Tomino
Crystallee Crain
Daniel Stern
Daniel Wright
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David Shrank
Dawn C Ewing
Dawn Harrington
Dawne Young
De'Angelo Buford
Debra Bennett
Debra Sheehan
Debra Williams
Denali Wilson
Denise McCreary
Devohn
Diana Block
Diane Crowson
Dolores Canales
Donna Hylton
Dorian Beas
Dorsey Nunn
Dr. Jay Borchert
Drew L
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Ebony Underwood
Elaine Daly
Elijah Truitt
Elizabeth Elliott
Elizabeth Hall
Elizabeth Hinchman
Emily Higgins
Enako Major
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Eric Brown
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Eunisses Hernandez
Evelyn Johnson
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Fidel Chagolla
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Francesca Purcell
Frank R. Herrmann, S.J.
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Gabriel Arkles
Gale Muhammad
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Jillian Burford
John Mathews
John Vasquez
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Jon James Jr.
Joneisha James
Jose Valle
Joshua Perldeiner
Juan Cabrales
Juan Ellison
Judy Greene
Judy Henderson
Judy McCarroll
Justine England
Justine Moore
Kaila Mathis
Karen Garcia
Karen Garrison
Kate Piper
Katherine Henao
Katherine Lanctot
Katherine Leiner
Kathy Morse
Katy Simmons
Keeda Haynes
Keisha Hudson
Kelly Garcia Chavez
Ken Oliver
Kianna Williams
Kimberly Garrett
Kimberly Haven
Kristie Puckett Williams
Kymberly Nelson
Ladavia Savoie
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Latisha morris
LaTonya Tate
LaToya Greer
Latrice Franklin
Laura Wagner
Laura Whitehorn
Lavinia Kellenberger
Leah Cazan
Leah Payne
Leslie Turner
Lex Steppling
Lillian T Williams
Lisa Ellis
Lois Ahrens
Lorenzo Harrell
Lori James Townes
Louis Gibson
Lupa Brandt
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Machelle Pearson
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Mallory Hanora
manuel la fontaine
Marcelino Rodriguez
Marcus Bullock
Margarer Robertson
Margaret Williams
Margot Kane
Marilynn B. Winn
Marshan Allen
Martha Williams
Mary Cross
Maryam Henderson-Uloho
Mateo de la Torre
Megan Leschak
melinda pressler
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michelle hannemann
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Tomeka Enoch
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Traci Pearl Littheut
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Wendell Watson
Wendy Golenbock
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Yolanda Navarrete
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Zoe Willmott