

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMUNITY GROUPS DEMAND ACTION TO PREVENT COVID-19 OUTBREAK IN THE DAVIDSON COUNTY JAIL

As concerns about COVID-19 mount, we, as residents of Nashville, grow increasingly concerned about the health of our friends and loved ones who are currently incarcerated at the Davidson County Jail. The Davidson County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) has currently limited family visitation to video only and has postponed all volunteer services. These measures fail to address the scope of the issue by further isolating people currently incarcerated. We need a more comprehensive plan to safeguard the health of the people being held and the staff who are working there. We know that communicable diseases spread readily in conditions where people are being held in close quarters as the 2017 scabies outbreak illustrated.

We know that approximately 70% of people being held in DCSO custody are pre-trial detainees. Many of those people are only there because they could not afford to pay bail. Their cases have not been adjudicated and they have not been found guilty of a crime.

Therefore, we are proposing the following:

1. Immediate release of all people being held in pre-trial detention.
2. End pretrial incarceration for every community member newly accused of a crime by releasing them on their own recognizance without restrictions.
3. Provide medical furlough and immediate release options for incarcerated people who are elderly, pregnant, and/or who have serious chronic medical conditions, mental illness, and disabilities.
4. Cease ICE enforcement and allow for individuals who have "ICE holds" to be released regardless of county.
5. Provide people who are incarcerated with access to free preventative measures, free medical testing, free treatment, and free phone calls.

6. Commit to humane and dignified treatment of people who remain held in pretrial detention.

These six steps will go a long way toward protecting the health and safety of incarcerated people and staff and will prevent the spread of COVID-19 to the rest of the Nashville community.

SIGNED:

No Exceptions Prison Collective

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Justice for Jocques Coalition

Showing Up for Racial Justice Nashville

Gideon's Army

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Democratic Socialists of America Nashville

Nashville Community Bail Fund

Healthy and Free Tennessee

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