

Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
Charles Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> Many of those detained in immigration detention centers are family units that include children and elderly folks.<sup>3</sup> 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:

<sup>1</sup> Tim Reid, Coronavirus Raises Concerns at Aliceville Prison (Mar. 17, 2020),

<https://www.cbs42.com/news/health/coronavirus/coronavirus-raises-concerns-at-aliceville-federal-prison/>

<sup>2</sup> 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](https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/quick-facts/BOP_May2019.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/11/01/whats-happening-at-the-u-s-mexico-border- in-5-charts/>

- 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 Participatory 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  
Ann-Marie Clark-Borden  
Anthony Luther  
April Goggans  
April Stafford  
Ariel Goode  
Ashlee Sellars  
Ashley whittemore  
Augustus kimple  
Ausetua 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  
Charles C. Weisbecker  
Charlie Sullivan  
Chelsea Lee  
Chelsea Yarborough  
Christi Cheramie  
Christina Sanchez  
Christine Clifford  
Consuela Gaines  
Courtney Stewart  
Crystal Carpenter  
Crystal Tomino  
Crystallee Crain  
Daniel Stern  
Daniel Wright  
Darren Mack  
Daryl Atkinson  
David Garlock  
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  
Dulce Saavedra  
Dwayne Meeks  
Ebony Underwood  
Elaine Daly  
Elijah Truitt  
Elizabeth Elliott  
Elizabeth Hall  
Elizabeth Hinchman  
Emily Higgins  
Enako Major  
eric alexander  
Eric Beard  
Eric Brown  
etta cetera  
Eunisses Hernandez  
Evelyn Johnson  
Evie Litwok  
Fatima  
Fidel Chagolla  
Florinda Rivera  
Fox and Rob Rich  
Fran Gilmore  
Francesca Duran-Lopez  
Francesca Purcell  
Frank R. Herrmann, S.J.  
Frantz Michel  
Fred Weatherspoon  
Gabriel Arkles  
Gale Muhammad

Genie Shupe  
Georgan Arsons  
Gisele Castro  
Gloria Garcia  
Grace Bauer  
Hamdiya CooksAbdullah  
Hanna Exel  
Hannah Duncan  
Heather Lewis  
Imani Mfalme  
Iss Nichols  
Issa Kohler-Hausmann  
Ivana Gonzales  
Ivelisse Gilestra  
Jade Brooks  
James A. deProphetis, Jr.  
James Kilgore  
James Thomas  
Jan R. Schneiderman  
Jana White  
Janis Ramazzini  
Jatoia Potts  
Jawharrah Bahar  
Jeannette Carrillo  
Jeannie Alexander  
Jen Jenkins  
Jenifer Wicks  
Jennifer Boyer  
Jennifer L Williams  
Jeremiah Dickinson  
Jerome Dillard  
Jesse Maley  
Jewu Richardson  
Jillian Burford  
John Mathews  
John Vasquez  
Jon James Sr.  
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  
Laila Aziz  
LaResse Harvey  
LaShunta Boler  
Latagia Copeland-Tyronce, MSW  
Latisha morris  
LaTonya Tate  
LaToya Greer  
Latrice Franklin  
Laura Wagner  
Laura Whitehorn  
Lavinia Kellenberger  
Leah Cazan  
Leah Payne  
Leslie Turner  
Lex Stepling  
Lillian T Williams  
Lisa Ellis  
Lois Ahrens  
Lorenzo Harrell  
Lori James Townes  
Louis Gibson  
Lupa Brandt  
lynetta Thompson  
M.H.Uribe  
Machelle Pearson

Madeline Nelson  
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  
Michael Bell  
Michael Cox  
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michelle hannemann  
Mishka Terplan  
Monika Wojnowski  
Mrs. Dee-Dee  
Naiya Speight-Leggett  
Nerika Jenkins  
Nicole Davis  
Nicole Levy  
Norris Henderson  
Norvelle Nelson  
Onyinye Alheri  
Pam Palmer  
Pamela starks  
Parish  
Patricia Boone-Edgerton Longoni  
Patrisse Cullors  
Patty Berger  
Paul Briley  
Paul J. LaRuffa  
Peggy Schroder  
Peggy West  
Peter Sills  
Phyllis Hardy  
Professor Margaret Drew  
Qiana Johnson  
Queen Karen Garrison  
Rahim Buford

Raj Jayadev  
Ralph Brazel Jr  
Ramiah Whiteside  
Raphael Anil  
Rebecca Hovarter  
Rebecca Weiker  
Regina Curry  
Reneshia Parker  
Rhoda Goodwin  
Roberto Herrera  
Robin McGinty  
Robin Turner  
Romarilyn Ralston  
Ruth Rollins  
Sabina Wildman  
Sameerah Shabazz  
Sarah Comeau  
Sarah Goldberg  
Sarait Escorza  
Sarann Chea  
Seth Weiner  
Shaddai Livingston  
Sharon Smith  
Sharon Turner  
Sierra Williams  
Sikander Iqbal  
Stacey Borden  
Starlene Patterson  
Stephanie Cull  
Steve Crum  
Steve Gamble  
Steve Huerta  
Susan Bustamante  
Susan Mason  
Susan Spalding  
T'Sheba Shareef  
Tatiana Reyes  
Teresa Garcia-Castro  
Teresa Woodford  
Terrell A. Blount  
Terri Collier  
Theresa Godfrey  
Tia Hamilton  
Tiara Moore  
Tiawana Brown  
Tiffany Alderman

Tiheba Bain  
Tina Reynolds  
Tomeka D Enoch  
Tonie Willis  
Towanda Tynes  
Trevor Walraven  
Traci Pearl Litthcut  
Valerie Todd Listman  
Vanee Sykes  
Vicky Brown  
Victoria Gamble  
Virginia Douglas  
Vivian Nixon  
Wayne Lane  
Wendell Watson  
Wendy Golenbock  
Whitney Storey  
Willa Beckman  
Willie Hardy  
Xavier McElrath-Bey  
Yolanda Ledesma  
Yolanda Navarrete  
Zahara Green  
Zoe Willmott