

CHANGE THE WORLD WHILE IN QUARANTINE!!

A New Advocate's Guide to Influencing Government Officials to #decarcerateCOVID19

THE FACTS:

The Illinois Department of Corrections' (IDOC) system has the bed space for 32,000 individuals. As of Dec 31, 2019, the system held 38,146 individuals

Dixon Correctional Center, the primary facility behind nursing care in IDOC is already 200 people over their 1,850 person capacity as of March 18, 2020

IDOC health care has consistently failed to meet basic standards, is chronically understaffed, and has been sued countless times for negligence, failure to provide life-saving care, and a variety other failures particular to health care.

According to the John Howard Association, "Of the 12,780 people who responded to JHA surveys at 21 facilities between April 2018 and May 2019, 65% expressed dissatisfaction with medical care, and 78% of people reported they were dissatisfied with IDOC's provision of hygiene items."

Our Goals:

Reduce the population in all Illinois Dept of Corrections (IDOC) facilities – and release all incarcerated people who fall into the CDC's highest risk categories. Take immediate steps to reduce risks for people held in prisons and jails during COVID-19.

Your Voice Matters! MAKE NOISE!

YOU CAN HELP RIGHT FROM HOME

Communicating with the right authorities is a proven and effective way that you can help make a change!

Governor Pritzker

He has the power to grant clemency to literally every single person incarcerated in the state of Illinois. He can enact compassionate release for as many elderly individuals or people with chronic illnesses as he wants. He can single handedly decrease the prison population, which has been overcrowded for decades, to full capacity (or less, if we want to truly provide room for social distancing inside).

VIA TWITTER

@GovPritzker, people in Illinois prisons need to be able to socially distance themselves. They can't when the system is more than 6,000 people over capacity. We must #decarcerateCOVID19. Release the elderly and ailing people in IDOC at the very least.

With a prison system operating at 120% capacity, how are the incarcerated people in our state's care supposed to socially distance themselves? @GovPritzker #decarcerateCOVID19

Seems like every prison in the state is in violation of @GovPritzker's ban on congregations of more than 250 people. The time has come to #decarcerateCOVID19

VIA EMAIL

Use this contact form:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/gov/contact-us/Pages/VoiceAnOpinion.aspx>

In the comment section, write:

"Please protect our state's incarcerated individuals from COVID19. Release the elderly and those with chronic illnesses. Immediately grant all pending commutation petitions that seek release based on terminal illness. Commute the sentences of anyone over the age of 60 with less than five years remaining to time served."

VIA FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/GovPritzker/>

SEND HIM A MESSAGE:

"Though I'm impressed with how you have been dealing with COVID19 broadly, it seems that you have been silent on care for the most vulnerable population when it comes to any pandemic: the incarcerated. Please begin using your executive clemency authority to bring the Illinois Dept of Corrections down to a maximum of full capacity. The system is now 120% over capacity.

People in prison also need soap.

Thank you."

BY PHONE

Numbers for his office:

1. 217-782-6830
2. 217-782-6831
3. 312-814-2121

"Hi my name is _____. I'm an Illinois resident. I am calling to ask that Governor Pritzker take action to release as many people as possible from prison as soon as possible in light of the threat that COVID19 poses to incarcerated populations. Thank you."

Illinois Prisoner Review Board

It decides who receives good time credits, and sets the terms of release. Granting a person good time credits means they will need to serve less of their overall sentence behind bars. Quick action in this area can send many home immediately. This board also has the power to release people from MSR (what many think of as "parole"), to decrease the in-person meetings between individuals and their supervising officers.

BY PHONE

They can be reached at this number: 217-782-7273

"Hi, my name is _____. I am an Illinois resident. I am calling to request that the board significantly expedite the issuance of good time credits for individuals in the Illinois Department of Corrections. For the public health of our state, we need to release as many people as possible, as soon as possible. I also request that you reduce the number of check-ins necessary between any individual on mandatory supervised release and their supervising officer. Every authority has the responsibility to stop mandating in-person during this time. Thank you."

Illinois State's Attorneys, Prosecutors, and Judges

They have the ability to stop putting people in jail and release people currently held there. They decide who is held in pre-trial detention, who is cited and released, who is being charged with what and whether or not it is an offense that risks threat to the community should that individual be released. They can lift all money bond requirements immediately.

Find out who yours are, and contact them!

Find your state's attorney [here](#) by looking up your county

Phone Script:

"Hi, my name is ____. I am a resident of ____ county. I am calling to ask that State's Attorney ____ take proactive steps toward decreasing our county jail population. Please stop bringing people in for new crimes. Cite and release whenever possible. And please release anyone who is in jail for a low-level crime simply because they cannot pay bond. Thank you for keeping our community safe during this pandemic."

Illinois Department of Corrections

BY PHONE

217-558-2200 ext. 2008

"Hi my name is _____. I'm an Illinois resident. I am aware that your department is operating at 120% capacity in the middle of a state and national crisis that calls us all to distance ourselves from one another. It is within your department's power to release any elderly person in your custody with less than 12 months remaining on their sentence. I'm calling to ask that you release all of those individuals immediately."

VIA EMAIL

Use this contact form:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/contactus/Pages/default.aspx>

Email Script:

"I am aware that your department is operating at 120% capacity in the middle of a state and national crisis that calls us all to distance ourselves from one another. It is within your department's power to release any elderly person in your custody with less than 12 months remaining on their sentence. I'm e-mailing to ask that you release all of those individuals immediately."

You can make a difference! Your Voice Matters!

"It is the perception of a giant wave of concern that motivates action. That action almost never ends up following one advocate or another's desired prescription. I think all of our job now may just be to remind [our government officials] moment by moment how large and diverse and smart and caring and thoughtful the people who care about Illinois inmates really are."

- Jobi Cates, Restore Justice Illinois

We may be quarantined but the advocacy for humanity and humane treatment never stops. The more we raise our voices in collective action, the more effective we'll be. The more friends we get to chime in, the more effective we will be. In times like this, the government looks to us for direction. Let's direct them to action.

#decarcerateCOVID19 #QuarantinedAdvocacy

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Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison via the Freedom to Learn Campaign IL, 2020