



ORLEANS PUBLIC DEFENDERS

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Hon. Robin Pittman
Deputy Chief Judge of the Criminal District Court
2700 Tulane Ave.
New Orleans LA 70119

March 27, 2020

Dear Judge Pittman,

I am writing to follow up on our Writ of Habeas Corpus filed on March 25, 2020. Since we filed, the MacArthur Justice Center filed their amicus brief and Sheriff Gusman wrote his own letter seeking broader relief than that in the *en banc* order. Both of those requests cited the urgency of the situation, with Sheriff Gusman calling this an “unprecedented time.” We believe that waiting even until early next week to act might be waiting too long to prevent an irreversible outbreak.

On March 25, 2020, the jail population was 918. On March 26, 2020, following the order of the *en banc*, the jail population was 901. We have since identified over 200 individuals who are being held in the Orleans Justice Center on felonies that are NOT crimes of violence. We urge you to release them immediately, including those with probation or parole holds.

Although this Court’s order followed our Writ, we are still awaiting a response pursuant to La. C. Cr. P. art. 354 (time for answer shall not exceed 72 hours from filing), so that we can address the 200+ individuals referenced above as well as the other classes of inmates raised in our petition.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Derwyn D. Bunton
Chief Public Defender

Cc:
Hon. Leon Cannizzaro, District Attorney
Sheriff Marlin Gusman
Hon. Karen Herman, Chief Judge, Section I
Hon. Laurie White, Section A

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Hon. Tracey Flemings-Davallier, Section B
Hon. Benedict Willard, Section C
Hon. Paul Bonin, Section D
Hon. Calvin Johnson, Section E
Hon. Jay Daniels, Section G
Hon. Camille Buras, Section H
Hon. Darryl Derbigny, Section J
Hon. Hunter Harris, Section K
Hon. Franz Zibilich, Section L
James Craig, MacArthur Justice Center
Steven Lassalle, Louisiana Department of Corrections