

March 24, 2020

State of Ohio, Governor Mike DeWine
State of Ohio, Department of Health
State of Ohio, Minority Health Commission
State of Ohio, Emergency Management Agency
Ohio Supreme Court
Butler County Sheriff's Office
Butler County Health Department
Butler County Board of Commissioners
Morrow County Sheriff's Office
Morrow County Health Department
Morrow County Board of Commissioners
Geauga County Sheriff's Office
Geauga County Health Department
Geauga County Board of Commissioners
Seneca County Sheriff's Office
Seneca County Health Department
Seneca County Board of Commissioners

To Whom It May Concern:

We write out of deep concern for the health of our family members, friends, and clients currently incarcerated in Ohio's prisons and jails. They include people in criminal and "civil" immigration custody. **Medical doctors have been warning that the jail setting is a veritable Petri dish for infectious disease; proactive, sweeping measures are needed to keep COVID-19 out of our jails and slow its destructive path.**

Many people living together in close quarters, often in dirty conditions without decent medical care, is a recipe for rapidly spreading COVID-19. Outbreaks in prisons would be extremely difficult for Ohio's already overtaxed medical community and government agencies to handle.

We need to learn from the jail outbreaks of COVID-19 in China and Iran, and release as many incarcerated people as possible to avoid them in Ohio.

The following steps must be taken immediately to contain this deadly disease and ensure the health and safety of all Ohioans, including those who are incarcerated:

- Immediately and dramatically reduce the number of people in Ohio jails and prisons, including those detained under civil immigration laws;
- Suspend deportations, immigration arrests, and in-person ICE and USCIS appointments;
- Close the Cleveland Immigration Court; and

- Ensure inmates have access to free soap, hand sanitizer, health care, and phone and video calls.

These measures would protect our loved ones and jail and court employees, while reducing the risk of massive outbreaks of COVID-19 that would further tax our medical and government resources. For more information, please see the backgrounder following our signatures.

Respectfully,

Organizations - Statewide (14)

ACLU of Ohio
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.
Cameroon American Council
Faith in Public Life
Hunger Network in Ohio
LULAC OHIO
Ohio Immigrant Alliance
Ohio Organizing Collaborative
Ohio Refuse Fascism
Ohio Student Association
OPAWL: Building AAPI Feminist Leadership in Ohio
Policy Matters Ohio
Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio
Unitarian Universalist Justice Ohio

Organizations - Local (44)

3R Fund for Immigrants	Newport, KY
Akron Interfaith Immigration Advocates	Akron
Center for Peace through Understanding	Sandusky

Church of Our Saviour/La Iglesia de Nuestro Salvador	Cincinnati
Cincinnati AMOS Project	Cincinnati
Cleveland Jobs with Justice	Cleveland
Cleveland Peace Action	Cleveland Heights
Community Refugee & Immigration Services	Columbus
Cosmic Bobbins	Cleveland
Crooked River Action	Cuyahoga Falls
Crossin Law Office	Columbus
Cuyahoga County Progressive Caucus	Middleburg Heights
DeEscalate Ohio Now, HeartbeatMovement	Columbus
Ed4All	Columbus/Cincinnati/Dayton
Fremont People for Peace Justice	Fremont
Glenmary Home Missioners	Lakeside Park, KY
Greater Cleveland Immigrant Support Network	North Royalton
HOLA	Norwalk
Immigrant Dignity Coalition	Cincinnati
International Institute of Akron	Akron
InterReligious Task Force On Central America & Colombia	Cleveland
Jewish Voice for Peace, Cleveland	Cleveland Heights
La Conexion	Bowling Green
La La Love Healthcare LLC	Campbell
Law Office of Nazly Mamedova	Cincinnati

Lorain Ohio Immigrant Rights Association	Lorain
Los Ninos de Corsos	Fremont
LSN Legal LLC	Chagrin Falls
Mercy Association	Holland
NW Ohio Network for Immigrant Rights	NW Ohio
Oberlin in Solidarity with El Salvador	Oberlin, OH; Cabañas, El Salvador
Ohio Immigrant Visitation	Columbus
People for Peace and Justice, Sandusky County	Perrysburg
Progressive Peace Coalition	Columbus
Reem For Ohio	Perrysburg
Sisters of Mercy	Cincinnati
Stop the Inhumanity at the Cuyahoga County Jail Coalition	Cleveland
Student Labor Action Coalition	Oberlin
The Pattakos Law Firm	Fairlawn
The Unitas Group	Cleveland Heights
Together and Free	Houston, TX
Transformations CDC	Cincinnati
Yes We Can Working Families	Columbus

Individuals (336)

Alan Fortnoff	Akron
Alexis Stores	Akron
Ayten Yener	Akron
Bertan Devrim	Akron
David Guran	Akron

Grace Goodluck	Akron
Julie Burnett	Akron
Maggie Duff	Akron
NCMCDOWELL	Akron
Ryan K	Akron
Sandra Murray	Akron
Maico Cruz Cruz	Amanda
Rev. Haroldo Nunes	Apple Creek
Mary L. Sutphin	Bay Village
Laura Chambers-Kersh MD	Beavercreek
Lynn Buffington	Beavercreek
Roberta Farinet	Beavercreek
Melissa Svigelj	Berea
Shelley Mack	Berea
Windermere Renaissance	Berkeley, California
Brandy Jatta	Blacklick
Linda Lander	Bowling Green
Hannah	Bremen
Hispanos	Brookpark
Ann C McGill	Brunswick
Ilmer T	Camas, WA
Jessica Porcha	Cambridge
Anna Liebler	Canton
Lara Nochomovitz	Chagrin Falls
Lisa Kollins	Chagrin Falls
Jennifer Scull	Chardon
Aundrey PayneSr	Charlotte, NC
Daniel Sheehan	Chicago Illinois
Marcelo Vincas	Chicago, IL
Aimee Benson	Cincinnati
Allison Reynolds-Berry	Cincinnati
Any Westphal	Cincinnati
Ashley Clark	Cincinnati
Awa Harouna	Cincinnati

Betty Dirr	Cincinnati
Bonnie Neumeier	Cincinnati
Chloe	Cincinnati
Chloe Corkery	Cincinnati
Clare	Cincinnati
Dan Schneider	Cincinnati
Dominique Brown	Cincinnati
Doris Gottemoeller	Cincinnati
Emily Thobe	Cincinnati
Gary Gosnell	Cincinnati
Greer Aeschbury	Cincinnati
Henry Zorn	Cincinnati
Jack Delisio	Cincinnati
Jedd Cole	Cincinnati
John Calhoun	Cincinnati
Joyce Dicks	Cincinnati
Karen Orsary	Cincinnati
Katie Dawson	Cincinnati
Lisa Gregg	Cincinnati
Liz Gottmer	Cincinnati
Liz Wilson	Cincinnati
Margaret Efke	Cincinnati
Marjorie Helen Rudemiller	Cincinnati
Megan Iverson	Cincinnati
Megan Iverson	Cincinnati
Michael T Lasonczyk	Cincinnati
Mike Brown	Cincinnati
Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church	Cincinnati
Nancy Sullivan	Cincinnati
Robert Ehram	Cincinnati
Sister Judith Clemens, SNDdeN	Cincinnati
Sister Kathleen Hebbeler	Cincinnati
Sister Sally Duffy	Cincinnati
Sisters of Mercy	Cincinnati

Sisters of Mercy	Cincinnati
Sr. Carol Ann Wenning	Cincinnati
Tom Strunk	Cincinnati
Zach Fisher	Cincinnati
Anne Caruso	Cleveland
Antiggonus Sabulsky	Cleveland
Aparna Narendrula	Cleveland
Areege Hammad	Cleveland
Avery Martens	Cleveland
Bhinnata Piya	Cleveland
Catherine R. Donnelly	Cleveland
Celeste Johnson	Cleveland
Chrissy Stonebraker-Martinez	Cleveland
Claudia Longo	Cleveland
Corrylee Drozda	Cleveland
Dana Buehner	Cleveland
Desmond Weisenberg	Cleveland
Ele Ashcraft	Cleveland
Emilia Vignola	Cleveland
Gloria Tavera, PhD, MD Candidate	Cleveland
Indivisible cle	Cleveland
Isabel Johnston	Cleveland
Jenna Ebersbacher	Cleveland
Jenny DuHaime	Cleveland
Julie Burrell	Cleveland
Kathleen Moser	Cleveland
Katy Kostenko	Cleveland
Lauren Napoli	Cleveland
Lisa	Cleveland
Liz	Cleveland
MAAC	Cleveland
Madeline McKenna	Cleveland
Maggie Sheck	Cleveland
Malcolm Neale	Cleveland

Maritza Rojas	Cleveland
Martha Loughridge	Cleveland
Maya A. Ajtun Castillo	Cleveland
Megan Wilson-Reitz	Cleveland
Molly Nagin	Cleveland
NatB	Cleveland
Nina McLellan	Cleveland
Paula J. Kampf	Cleveland
Rachel Napolitano	Cleveland
Rev. Shelley Nelson-Bridger	Cleveland
Samantha Kelts	Cleveland
Sandra Albro	Cleveland
Sarah Horter	Cleveland
Sharie Renee	Cleveland
Sue Janssen	Cleveland
Susan Miller	Cleveland
Taylor Sordini-Cornwall	Cleveland
Timothy Farrell	Cleveland
Anne Hill	Cleveland Heights
Dale Winsberg	Cleveland Heights
Dr.	Cleveland Heights
Elana Baldwin	Cleveland Heights
Eve McPherson	Cleveland Heights
Fadeke Muraina	Cleveland Heights
Gail Larson	Cleveland Heights
Janet Kramer	Cleveland Heights
Joan Lederer MD	Cleveland Heights
Kahlil Seren	Cleveland Heights
Kathy Flora	Cleveland Heights
Laurel Simkoff	Cleveland Heights
Lynn Tramonte	Cleveland Heights
Marlene Goldheimer	Cleveland Heights
Matt Marshall	Cleveland Heights
Ms. Mary P Kelsey	Cleveland Heights

Rachel Rosen DeGolia	Cleveland Heights
Rafael de la Barrera	Cleveland Heights
Select...	Cleveland Heights
Shari Nacson, Northern Ohio Asylum Project	Cleveland Heights
Sharon Shumaker	Cleveland Heights
Sheila Keller	Cleveland heights
Sheryl Parks	Cleveland Heights
Steve Cagan	Cleveland Heights
Chaplain at Clyde St Mary	Clyde
Laura Vanessa Valbuena Rodriguez	Colombia
Anna Babel	Columbus
Brandy Hughes	Columbus
Carrie Vereide	Columbus
Charlene Brenner	Columbus
Danya	Columbus
Dr. Rosaire Ifedi	Columbus
Emily Brown	Columbus
Esmirna Rubi Cruz-Cruz	Columbus
Individual	Columbus
Jen Mankin	Columbus
Jessica O'Donnell	Columbus
Jillian Baker	Columbus
Katherine Carter	Columbus
Kellie NeylanOputa	Columbus
Kevin Vereide	Columbus
Kimberly Thesing	Columbus
Lydia Addair	Columbus
Maggie K	Columbus
Mara Christine	Columbus
Mary Louise Hawkins	Columbus
Michael Babcock	Columbus
Paula Matthews	Columbus
Red Migrante Ohio	Columbus
Sandra Hall	Columbus

Tekla Taylor-Lagway	Columbus
Tim Chavez	Columbus
Trinity Health	Columbus
Vahni Kurra	Columbus
Mary Glaser	Covington, KY
Kevin Zhao	Cupertino, California
Carol B	Cuyahoga Falls
Eleanor Speck	Cuyahoga Falls
Jaclyn Kurtz	Cuyahoga Falls
Julie Skala	Cuyahoga Falls
Kathryn A. Ress	Cuyahoga Falls
Stephanie Triffun	Cuyahoga Falls
Maggie Larche	Daphne
Danielle West	Dayton
Dr. Maureen OMeara	Dayton
Dr. Rachael A. Richter	Dayton
Jennie Valdez	Dayton
Joel R. Pruce	Dayton
Kathleen Kersh	Dayton
Maria Otero	Dayton
Maureen OMeara	Dayton
Sara French	Dayton
William Ross	Dayton
Lilia Palmer	Dublin
Mark Oliphant	Edgerton
Kathleen Slogar	Euclid
Raven Nyamwihura	Euclid
Stephanie Johnson	Euclid
Kimberly Mann	Fairview Park
Marcie Jones	Farmington, MN
Rebecca Wimberley	Fort Walton Beach, FL
Nancy	Fort Worth, TX
Josie Setzler	Fremont
Kay Mooney	Fremont

Marg Wolf	Fremont
Lauren Sithens	GA
Amy M. Crossin, Esq.	Gahanna
Marge Carnahan	Galion
Ms.	Gallipolis
Ms.Mary Beth Fitzpatrick	Gallipolis
Gloria Cruz Dominguez	Galloway
Caitlin Baker	Garfield Heights
Herrlinda Santiago Cruz	Grove City
Deborah Schlarb	Hartville
Francesca Phillis	Highland Heights
Jennifer Vasquez	Holland
Susan Haas	Hopewell
Christina Puntaseccs	Huber Hights
Diamond Daniel	Kent
Iris Meltzer	Kent
Ms Kathleen Baka	Kirtland
Adele Kelley Darlinf	Lakewood
Adrian Griffin	Lakewood
Adrian Marti	Lakewood
Daniel Ortiz	Lakewood
Gabrielle Smith	Lakewood
Holly K Gigante	Lakewood
Jessica Cline	Lakewood
Judy Wright	Lakewood
Matt Kuhns	Lakewood
Phillip Emerson	Lakewood
Virginia Rivera	Lakewood
Xan Schwartz	Lakewood
Paul Helbling	Liberty Center
individual	Lithopolis
Aditi Madhok	Los Altos
Maria Garcia	Los Angeles, CA
Meredith Cizlak	Lufkin, Texas

Sarah Tuttle	MA
DeAuna Mcintosh	Marion
Nancy Fortney	Marion
Vicki Brown	Marion
Alene	Massachusetts
Brian Touchette	Massillon
Valerie	Medina
Megan Bettelon	Medway
Mrs	Mentor
John Christine	Milford
Roman Catholic Church	Mount St. Joseph
Hope Forbes	Needham, MA
Jeff Richardson	Newport, KY
Brian Newberg	North Canton
Sr. Evelyn	North Carolina
Don M Bryant	North Royalton
individual	Oberlin
Jasper Perry-Anderson	Oberlin
Sarah Johnson	Oberlin
Steven Volk	Oberlin
Individual	OH
Gregory Thomas	Ohio
J Young	Ohio
Mckahan	Ohio
Ronnie Dewitt	Ohio
Brittany King	Plain City
Sabrina Caprioli	Old Bridge, NJ
Sisters of Mercy	Oregon
Donna Chi	Orrville
Mikhaila Fogel	Oxford
Patricia Denny	Painesville
Susan Blankenship	Painesville
Katelyn Andrews	Pataskala
Barbara Kaplan	Peninsula

Hilary Hall	Pepper Pike
Helen Bare	Perrysburg
Laurie Snyder	Perrysburg
Robert Clark-Phelps	Perrysburg
Joshanna McKahan	Philo
Andre Stores	Pittsburgh, PA
Alex Domico	Port Orange, FL
Individual	Port Orange, FL
Kathryn McKibben	Portage
Vit	Portland, OR
Susan Sheinfeld	Quincy, MA
Sarah Paulett	Richfield
michael tadsen	Rock Creek
Mr. Michael Tadsen	Rock Creek
Carolina Phillips	Rocky River
Amy Schlessman	Sandusky
Eilis McCulloh	Seven Hills
Ms. Lucy McKernan	Seven Hills
Judy Reid	Shaker Heights
Nicole Herbert-Hale	Shaker Heights
Roberta Herman	Shaker Heights
Sharon	Silver Lake
Kristina Smith	Solon
Dr. Patricia Kellner	South Euclid
Willows Family Resource Center	Springdale
Tracy Katz	Steubenville
Sara Koopman	Stow
Tina Nees	Stow
Mary Ann Mistovich	Struthers
Rosemary Hollen	Struthers
Heidemarie Erika Lohrmann	Sylvania
Sharon Havelak	Sylvania
Fr. Tony Gallagher	Toledo
Ramon Perez	Toledo

Rev. Dr. Bev Bingle	Toledo
Tana M. Schiewer	Toledo
Veralucia Mendoza	Toledo
Brittany Ford	Toledo
Jacob Lang	Toledo
Patricia L. Schnapp	Toledo
Sisters of St. Francis	Toledo
Sarah McCrea	Twinsburg
Cynthia Dotson	Uniontown
Liberal Activist	Uniontown
Dave Contento	University Heights
Katharine Beutner	University Heights
Cami Ross	Valley View
Marlene Tramonte	Wadsworth
Christine Rizkallah	Warren
Alptekin Aydogan	Wooster
Iemanja Brown	Wooster
Jason Ferrell	Wooster
Ruth Sewell	Wooster
Robin Gilbert	Worthington
Individual	Youngstown
Janae	Youngstown
Melissa	Youngstown
Stephanie Vagas	Youngstown
Brittany Caldwell	Zanesville

ATTACHMENT

Backgrounder: Keep COVID-19 Out of Ohio Jails and Prisons

Immediately and dramatically reduce the number of people in Ohio jails and prisons.

Every agency that incarcerates people in Ohio should review its full list of cases, identify those who are already eligible for release, and allow them to go home immediately. This includes, but is not limited to, county and city governments and federal immigration agencies. Ohio and federal courts should also determine which inmates can be effectively released in the near future, and take steps to pave the way toward their release, as has begun to happen in Cuyahoga County and other places.

Courts and arresting agencies should not add to the incarcerated population. Incarceration should be considered a last resort at every point in a criminal or immigration case. In immigration court, judges should offer alternatives to detention as a default, rather than high bonds, to avoid expanding the incarcerated population.

Suspend deportations, immigration arrests, and in-person ICE and USCIS appointments.

Reducing travel and social contact are primary ways to “flatten the curve” of this global pandemic. Deportations are travel and should be suspended immediately. ICE and Border Patrol arrests involve social contact and add to the jail population, which needs to be reduced, rather than expanded.

In-person ICE and USCIS appointments also violate recommendations for social distancing. Some of these appointments can be effectively handled through phone or digital means. Others should be rescheduled after the pandemic is over.

Close the Cleveland Immigration Court.

The federal Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR)’s Immigration Court in Cleveland should suspend operations, effective immediately.

The National Association of Immigration Judges (NAIJ); American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 511 (Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Professionals Union); and American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) issued a joint statement making this very demand: “Failing to take this action now will exacerbate a once in a century public health crisis.”

On March 15, EOIR postponed all in-person master calendar hearings between March 16 and April 10. But individual hearings are still going forward, continuing to put the public and court staff at risk. The Seattle Immigration Court has already closed; Cleveland and others should follow. Bond hearings conducted remotely should continue until all immigrants are released.

Ensure inmates have access to free soap, hand sanitizer, and phone and video calls.

It goes without saying that soap and disinfectants should be in abundance at our jails and prisons at all times, including during a pandemic. Sadly, this is not the case. In some jails, bathroom soap dispensers are always empty. Inmates are forced to purchase their own soap, at exorbitant prices. Health care should also be a given, but costs and corners are cut all the time.

Also, Ohio is no longer allowing inmates to receive visits from loved ones as a precautionary measure. Contact with loved ones is vital to mental health, and people in detention also have a constitutional right to speak with their lawyers.

Hygiene supplies, health care, video and phone calls must be made free to inmates during the duration of this outbreak. Price-gouging commissary and phone and video services should not be allowed to take advantage of struggling families ever, especially during this national emergency.