



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Statement on Class Action Suit Alleging Illegal and Unconstitutional
Conditions in Los Angeles Jails**

*LA County and Sheriff's Department Failing to Protect Incarcerated Individuals
From COVID-19*

LOS ANGELES — Today, the Justice-LA COVID-19 response team filed a lawsuit alleging that the County of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department are failing to adequately protect the lives and safety of people incarcerated within Los Angeles County jail system from COVID-19, in violation of their civil and constitutional rights and the Americans with Disabilities Act. **Miriam Krinsky, executive director of Fair and Just Prosecution** and a former federal prosecutor, released the following statement in response to the lawsuit:

"We've known since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic that jails and prisons are ticking timebombs. The question of a deadly outbreak is not if, but when. Around the country, from New York to Louisiana to Ohio, we are already seeing correctional facilities becoming hotspots of infection and some of the largest drivers of outbreaks, which threaten not just those in custody, but the entire community.

"While Los Angeles County has released slightly over 30 percent of individuals held in jail facilities, that is nowhere near the levels achieved by other jurisdictions like San Francisco, where they have decreased jail populations by 40 percent since January, nor is it near sufficient to reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic outbreak and save lives. As new infections mount, especially in these facilities that already had a troubling history of overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, the responsible and humane thing to do is to immediately release anyone who is elderly and medically vulnerable to sharply reduce populations and allow for social distancing for those who remain incarcerated.

"How we respond to this crisis will define our moral compass - and stepping up to prevent these facilities from becoming death traps is the only right thing to do."

Since the early days of the pandemic Fair and Just Prosecution (FJP) has been a leading voice on [reducing jail and prison populations](#) to reduce the threat posed by COVID-19. For more information about FJP and our work to save lives during this global crisis, [visit our website](#).

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***Fair and Just Prosecution** is a national network of elected prosecutors working towards common-sense, compassionate criminal justice reforms. To learn more about FJP's work, visit <http://www.fairandjustprosecution.org/> or follow us on Facebook [@FairAndJustProsecution](#).*