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Comment on California Governor Gavin Newsom's Recent Action

[Fair and Just Prosecution](#) Executive Director Miriam Krinsky issued the following statement today in response to California Governor Newsom's decision to release thousands from California prisons:

“Governor Newsom’s action today – [ordering the release of 8,000 individuals](#) in California's prisons who are at dire risk in the face of COVID-19 -- is an important and commendable step toward protecting the lives of people behind bars and the community, but unfortunately it came too late to save the lives of over 30 people who have already died. Being sentenced to prison should not be a death sentence. The catastrophic outbreaks within CA prisons require immediate action - a reduction of thousands of individuals over the next six months, while important and more than many states have done, will do little to halt the humanitarian crisis occurring *today*.

It is our hope that Governor Newsom will *immediately* release those individuals who are elderly and otherwise medically vulnerable to coronavirus. The deadly and fast-moving outbreak in San Quentin Prison is now the second largest in the country. And it is a ticking time bomb.

All governors can learn from Governor Newsom’s leadership – and also from the cost of the state’s delay -- and take dramatic actions before their own states suffer similar or higher death tolls. This is a concern for our *entire* community, as infections that are brought into custodial settings also return to the broader community when staff who work in these facilities go home to their families at the end of each shift. And given the racial disparities in incarceration, prison decarceration is also a racial justice issue. Black lives matter, and any governor who has recently affirmed their commitment to racial justice, yet neglected people behind bars with regard to COVID-19, must be held accountable and take action *now* to protect the health and safety of people who are incarcerated and who work in these facilities.”

For more information on FJP’s work on these issues, visit our [website pages](#) on Covid-19 and the criminal justice system.