



On behalf of Justice LA & Reform L.A Jails, and in solidarity with the LA County Public Defender's Union, we are asking that action be taken to reduce the acute health risk to the jail population who is the most vulnerable and to whom all officers of the court have an ethical duty to protect. Insufficient responses to crises like these violate the 8th amendment, while also perpetuating the very problems we all work tirelessly to address. We deeply respect your leadership and appreciate your engagement on this letter.

As such, we ask that you share these feasible, just, and practical demands be taken by the Superior Court and all other relevant actors:

- Reduce number of in-person court appearances for non-essential issues and low-level cases (e.g. misdemeanor progress reports, etc.)
- Adjust bench warrant practices and reduce unnecessary documentation from medical offices for missing court dates or caring for sick loved ones, etc.
- Adjust practices to acknowledge economic factors that may impact strict compliance and/or attendance at proceedings or collateral court obligations (e.g. probation, DVCs, etc.)
- Allow for video, telephone and/or digital appearances in order to keep court dates in tact and respect due process
- To prepare for bail hearings that address the significant risk of mortality and spread of the disease inside custodial facilities (see attached handout regarding background on Covid-19 conditions in NY custodial facilities)
- To prepare for sentence modifications requests to reduce the risk of infection.
- Require that all staff, including Deputies entering the jail facilities be tested prior to starting their respective work shifts.

Furthermore, we believe the Department should move to immediately develop both litigation and advocacy strategy at each branch that is specific to unique issues at each work location. Specifically:

- The Department should review the attached San Francisco bail motion, and swiftly adjust it for LA County, and distribute it widely to the entire office
- Provide resources to attorneys in all trial assignments and instructions to trial lawyers (non-arraignment personnel) on litigating bail motions due to this changed circumstance
- Provide appellate support for the litigation of these motions
- Communicate the Department's comprehensive litigation strategy and advocacy plan to address COVID-19 and to advocate for clients to the Department utilizing the Portal and PDNet.
- Continue to advocate for the release of individuals currently incarcerated in LA County and juvenile settings in the media, with the BOS, with all other stakeholders, and any other relevant entity. See:
<https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/article241090881.html>

Thank you for your continued integrity and leadership, and the work you do to protect our community members.

Sincerely,

The JusticeLA Coalition, and Reform L.A Jails.