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March 18, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you are increasingly making clear to the American people, the coronavirus is very serious and spreading quickly around the world and across our country. As this pandemic spreads, you are giving us the proper cooperative and voluntary protocols: stay home, wash your hands often and practice social distancing.

Not everyone can do this. Specifically, I want to raise a concern with you about those who are incarcerated and cannot practice social distancing—i.e., the prison population. In prison there are too many people in proximity to each other who do not have the option of social distancing and there are literally millions of persons incarcerated who were arrested, but not convicted, who are languishing in prison awaiting trial. My concern is specifically with those arrested for non-violent crimes.

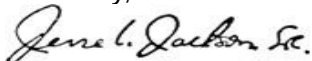
If one visitor has already transmitted the virus to an inmate, that inmate may have transmitted it to another inmate and that pattern could put many, if not the entire prison population in jeopardy because “social distancing” is not an option for prisoners. Jail could become an incubator and death sentence for those incarcerated.

I am urging you to consider immediately testing the 2.2 million persons currently incarcerated. They are a captive audience and should not be devoured by the virus should someone in prison have it and spread it. And please consider releasing those arrested for non-violent offenses who are still incarcerated, but not convicted, after they have been tested for the virus so that they do not endanger the health of other inmates or the general public if they are released. We cannot leave those without healthcare to threaten the healthcare of all. Non-violent offenders should be released, monitored and no put the public’s health in jeopardy. We need government action in this regard and I’m counting on you to take it.

Feel free to contact me via my Chief of Staff John Mitchell at (773) 383-9589 if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.
Founder and President