

March 10, 2020

Governor Ned Lamont
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
RE: COVID-19 Response Planning

Dear Governor Lamont,

I write to offer the ACLU of Connecticut as a resource as your administration continues to develop a response plan that protects the health, safety, and civil liberties of everyone in Connecticut.



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As you may know, on Monday, a group of more than 800 public health experts and organizations signed a public letter warning that widespread transmission of COVID-19 within the United States is “inevitable.”¹ This letter includes recommendations to federal, state, and local leaders on achieving a fair and effective response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Although voluntary isolation measures are more effective than coercive measures, we recognize the use of a mandatory quarantine may be justified if it is scientifically supported, proportional to the risk presented, and is the least restrictive means to protect public health. Additionally, it is important for the state to continue to be transparent with the public and regularly revisit the response to COVID-19 to ensure that they are still necessary as the situation rapidly evolves. Residents must not lose their due process rights, including the right to challenge any quarantine.

To limit the transmission of the virus and ensure an equitable approach to combating the virus, responses to COVID-19 must ensure that all people, regardless of financial means, incarceration status, or immigration status, have access to testing and treatment. The state should take all steps possible to ensure that everyone has access to medical care for the virus and feels safe obtaining testing or treatment. Healthcare facilities should be publicly declared immigration enforcement-free zones. People in prisons are particularly vulnerable, and the state’s plans must include ready access to hygiene supplies and evidence-based, timely, complete care for incarcerated people. COVID-19 should not be used as an excuse for

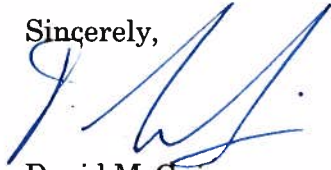
¹ Gregg S. Gonsalves, et al., *Achieving A Fair and Effective COVID-19 Response: An Open Letter to Vice-President Mike Pence, and Other Federal, State and Local Leaders from Public Health and Legal Experts in the United States*, Mar. 2, 2020, available at https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/area/center/ghjp/documents/final_covid-19_letter_from_public_health_and_legal_experts.pdf.

prolonged, widespread lockdowns in state-run prisons and jails; any lockdowns should be scientifically supported and as limited in scope as possible.

We are available to meet and discuss your COVID-19 response planning and will be closely monitoring the government's response to ensure that it is scientifically justified and no more intrusive on civil liberties than absolutely necessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. McGuire', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David McGuire
Executive Director

Cc: DPH Commissioner Coleman-Mitchell
DOC Commissioner Cook