



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

October 19, 2020

Governor Ned Lamont
Office of the Governor
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Judge Patrick L. Carroll III
Chief Court Administrator, Judicial Branch
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Commissioner Angel Quiros
Department of Correction
24 Wolcott Hill Road
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Governor Lamont, Commissioner Quiros and Judge Carroll:

Connecticut is seeing a dramatic and disturbing rise in crime especially in our cities. Those who live in and are leaders in our urban communities are begging for help and increased public safety, and we are writing to you today with that same goal in mind.

Following comments made by Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin on Saturday in response to the Governor sending in State Police to the capital city to help address the sharp increase in violence, we would like to request a summary of how many individuals have been released from prison since the start of the pandemic in March and what criteria was used to determine if someone was eligible to be released. We would like to know how that criteria has changed from criteria in place before the pandemic. We also would like to know if and how the criteria has changed throughout the pandemic and who makes the final release decision. The public has the right to know.

On Saturday when Mayor Bronin discussed why the city is seeing an increase in crimes such as shootings and he pointed to an increase in the release and failure to incarcerate offenders. He stated: "Many court operations were suspended or not operating at their full capacity. There are, we believe, a number of cases of individuals who might normally been held in custody for their involvement in violent crime were released, because of concerns about COVID." Mayor Bronin also raised concerns about limited in-person supervision of parolees. He repeated these concerns on social media, tweeting, "too many of the individuals our cops are arresting for serious violence are not being held. That's also been exacerbated by the pandemic."

This is not the first time we have heard city officials and police officers raise similar concerns.

New Haven Police Chief Otoniel Reyes said last month that when looking at the pool of those involved in violence in the Elm City, a larger percentage than average had recently been released from prison, including on probation or parole. He stated that while there are many reasons for the rise in crime, he thought the increase of people being released on probation or parole could be the greatest single contributing factor. He also cited the killing of Day'Shon Smith and the wounding of four others in which all three individuals allegedly responsible for the shooting were on probation or parole.

We are concerned that the increase in prison releases as well as the effects of the police accountability bill tying the hands of police officers and banning proactive policing measures such as consent searches could be creating a perfect storm for increased violence and crime.

We believe the strength of our state depends on the strength of our cities and our cities clearly have problems that demand our attention. Every person deserves to feel safe and secure in their neighborhood. We are deeply concerned that multiple policies in place in our state today are making our state less safe. We ask for this information so we can better understand what policies your administration has implemented to oversee the release of offenders from prison.

Thank you for your attention,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Len Fasano".

Len Fasano
Senate Republican Leader

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vincent J. Candelora".

Vincent Candelora
Deputy House Republican Leader