



Coalition to End Money Bond

Cook County Board of Commissioners
118 N. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60602
Sent via electronic mail

October 26, 2022

Re: Opposition to Expansion of Pretrial Electronic Monitoring in Cook County

Dear Commissioners:

We the undersigned organizations write to express our ardent opposition to any expansion of pretrial electronic monitoring (EM) in Cook County. Between the Cook County Sheriff's Office Electronic Monitoring Program (CCSO) and the Office of the Chief Judge's (OCJ) Home Confinement Unit, Cook County operates one of the largest pretrial electronic monitoring programs in the nation, with over [3,700 people](#) monitored daily. Each year, Cook County spends more than \$35 million on these programs even though they provide no meaningful benefit to public safety. The vast majority of people on the program [appear at all of their court dates and less than 1% are rearrested](#) for allegations of violence, proving they could be safely released without these restrictive conditions. These findings mirror [research from jurisdictions across the country](#) that have found that electronic monitoring has no material impact on re-arrest rates of people awaiting trial or rates of court appearances.

House arrest with electronic monitoring replicates many of the same harms experienced by people incarcerated in brick and mortar jails. Due to severe restrictions on movement, it is often difficult for people on electronic monitoring with house arrest to find stable employment, maintain their mental and physical health, sustain relationships with family and friends, or participate in their own legal defense. The use of electronic monitoring also harms the friends and family of people on monitors, who are forced to take on all responsibilities outside the home and are subjected to [invasive, unscheduled "check-ins."](#) searches, and other additional law enforcement contact at their homes.

Individuals subjected to the harsh conditions of pretrial electronic monitoring are being punished before trial and denied the presumption of innocence. **Electronic monitoring is also disproportionately being used to surveil Black people awaiting trial. Less than 25% of Cook County is Black, while [nearly 75% of the people on electronic monitoring are Black.](#)**

Moreover, the global positioning system (GPS) devices used to monitor people on house arrest are consistently faulty. [Research presented to the Sheriff's Office](#) in November 2021 showed that over 91% of the alerts generated by electronic monitoring bands were false positives. There have been [multiple credible reports](#) of people on EM being flagged for violations because the technology reports incorrect locations and cannot accurately track people when they are indoors. People on electronic monitoring can face punitive repercussions when the technology fails, such as reincarceration, revocation of their bond, or new misdemeanor and felony charges.

Despite these facts and the recommendations of Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts and CGL Companies, who were contracted by the Cook County Justice Advisory Council (JAC) to [review the pretrial electronic monitoring \(EM\) programs](#), the Cook County Board of Commissioners voted to approve the CCSO's proposal for a contract amendment with Track Group, Inc. (the Sheriff's private contractor for GPS devices) that extended the contract an additional year, through January of 2024, and increased its allocation by \$4 million. Instead of investing more money into electronic monitoring, we implore the county to reduce its use of this harmful technology. Cook County will be a safer place when fewer people are subjected to this extreme pretrial punishment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at info@endmoneybond.org with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

The Coalition To End Money Bond and more than 40 additional organizations:

#LetUsBreathe Collective	Community Renewal Society
A Just Harvest	Communities United
ACLU of Illinois	Criminal Justice Task Force at First
Believers Bail Out	Unitarian Church of Chicago
Blackroots Alliance	Equity and Transformation (EAT)
The Cannabis Equity Illinois Coalition	First Followers
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless	Gamaliel of Illinois
Chicago Community Bond Fund	Graduate Employees' Organization at UIUC
Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights	HANA Center
Chicago Torture Justice Center	The John Howard Association
Chicago Votes Action Fund	Illinois Alliance for Reentry & Justice
Children's Best Interest Project	Illinois Justice Project
Circles & Ciphers	Illinois National Organization for Women
	Illinois Prison Project

Justice and Witness Ministry of Chicago
Metropolitan Association – Illinois
Conference United Church of Christ
Legal Council for Health Justice
Liberation Library
Live Free: Chicago
Loevy & Loevy Attorneys at Law
Love & Protect
The Mandel Legal Aid Clinic of the
University of Chicago Law School
MediaJustice
Muslim Civic Coalition
Nehemiah Trinity Rising
The Next Movement at Trinity United
Church of Christ
Parole Illinois
People's Action
The People's Lobby
Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation

Pretrial Justice Institute
Prison Neighborhood + Arts/Education
Project
Pushing Envelopes
She Votes Illinois
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Silver Law Office PC
The Smart Decarceration Project at the
University of Chicago
Southsiders Organized for Unity and
Liberation (SOUL)
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of
Illinois
Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of
Illinois
United Working Families
Uptown People's Law Center
Women's Justice Institute
Workers Center for Racial Justice

Cc: Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Chief of Staff Lanetta Haynes Turner
Cook County Justice Advisory Council Executive Director Avik Das and Deputy
Director Ali Abid