Re: Support for SAFE-T Act Trailer Bill Measures in HB5537

Dear members of Illinois’ 102nd General Assembly,

As trailer bill negotiations are underway for the Pretrial Fairness provisions of the SAFE-T Act, we, the undersigned organizations representing thousands of Illinois residents, are writing to express our strong support for legislative proposals that stay true to the promise of this historic racial justice legislation. We believe that the changes included in HB5537 will help Illinois safely and effectively implement the Pretrial Fairness Act, and must be included in any SAFE-T Act trailer bill passed by the legislature.

Since the Pretrial Fairness Act was passed in January 2021, stakeholders from every branch of government have been working together under the leadership of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts to ensure that counties across Illinois have the guidance and resources they need to effectively make this transition. The final adopted trailer bill should be informed by those efforts and help address concerns so that the law is successfully implemented in counties across our state. As the effective date of the Pretrial Fairness Act quickly approaches in just a few short months, it is critical that legislators adopt proposed language that clarifies and makes consistent the law’s standards for detaining people for safety reasons, places clear legal limits on pretrial incarceration by retaining a detention eligibility net, codifies the timelines for hearings and creates a clear process for the state to transition out of money bond.

The Pretrial Fairness Act is one of the most comprehensive pieces of pretrial justice reform this nation has seen, and it has positioned Illinois as a leader in efforts to meaningfully address the racial and economic injustice that wealth-based jailing has inflicted on marginalized communities for decades. The Illinois legislature passed this historic law in response to the largest civil rights protests in our nation’s history which took place in the summer of 2020 following the police murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. The Pretrial Fairness Act makes sure that low-income people are not trapped in a cycle of poverty and jail time in a criminal justice system that violates the basic constitutional and human rights of our community’s most vulnerable people.

SB4228, drafted by the Illinois State’s Attorneys Association, would not safely and effectively implement the Pretrial Fairness Act. While some members of the State’s Attorneys Association have expressed a willingness to end money bond, SB4228 makes clear that they are only willing to do so if it increases their ability to incarcerate more Illinoisians indefinitely while they await trial. If adopted, their proposal would increase pretrial jailing throughout our state and exacerbate the egregious racial disparities that already exist in Illinois jails. Unnecessary pretrial incarceration of those who are presumed innocent leads to the disruption of family, neighborhood, employment, and community ties. Such disruptions have actually been found to
increase the risk of recidivism and undermine community safety. SB4228 would result in a pretrial legal system far more unfair than the one currently in place, and would take our state backwards rather than forward.

Any adopted trailer bill must result in the smooth, safe, and sustainable transition away from the money bond system towards a justice system that prioritizes community safety while protecting people’s rights. This is what our state deserves and has patiently awaited for decades.

Thank you in advance for following through on your promise to our communities. We will stand by you as our state forge ahead leading the nation into more fair and just pretrial legal systems.

Sincerely,

The Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice and more than 130 organizations in support of the Pretrial Fairness Act:

#LetUsBreathe Collective
A Way Inn
Access Living
ACLU - Springfield
ACLU of Illinois
Alliance for Safety and Justice
Asian Americans Advancing Justice
Believers Bail Out
Black Justice Project
Black Light Fellowship
Black Lives Matter Blono
Black Lives Matter SPI
Blackroots Alliance
Bloomington-Normal Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America
BPI Chicago
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
Cabrini Green Legal Aid
CAIR-Chicago
Cannabis Equity IL Coalition
Carbondale Spring
Central Illinois Mosque and Islamic Center
Champaign County ACLU
Champaign County Bailout Coalition
Champaign Urbana immigration Forum
Champaign-Urbana Courtwatch
Champaign-Urbana Democratic Socialists of America
Champaign-Urbana Showing Up for Racial Justice (CU-SURJ)
Change Peoria
Channing-Murray Foundation
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Chicago Community Bond Fund
Chicago Council of Lawyers
Chicago Democratic Socialists of America
Chicago Jobs Council
Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
Chicago Recovery Alliance
Chicago Teachers Union
Chicago Torture Justice Center
Chicago United for Equity
Chicago Urban League
Chicago Votes
Circles & Ciphers
Clergy for a New Drug Policy
Coalition to Reduce Recidivism
Communities United
Concerned Citizens of Precinct 12
Covenant United Church of Christ
Criminal Justice Task Force at First Unitarian Church of Chicago
Elliott Counseling Group
Equity And Transformation
Faith Coalition for the Common Good
Faith in Place Action Fund
First Followers
First United Methodist Church, Oak Park
Gamaliel Network
Gamaliel of Illinois and Iowa (GOII)
Growing Home, Inc.
HANA Center
Human Opposition Movement for Equality
Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition
Illinois Alliance for Reentry & Justice
Illinois National Organization for Women (NOW)
Illinois Prison Project
Illinois Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC-IL)
Inner-City Muslim Action Network
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
John Howard Association of Illinois
Jolt Foundation
Lake County Coalition to Reduce Recidivism
Law Enforcement Action Partnership
Lawndale Christian Legal Center
Legal Council for Health Justice
Liberation Library
Live Free Chicago
Live Free Illinois
Loevy & Loevy Attorneys at Law
Mandel Legal Aid Clinic of the University of Chicago Law School
Masjid Al-Taqwa
MediaJustice
Mental Health America of Illinois
Mental Health Summit
Metropolitan Tenants Organization
Midwest Immigration Bond Fund
Mutual Ground, Inc.
NAMI Barrington Area
NAMI South Suburbs of Chicago

National Alliance on Mental Illness of Illinois (NAMI IL)
National Lawyers Guild Chicago
National Rainbow PUSH Coalition
New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia
New True Vine Baptist Church
Nikkei Uprising
Northside Transformative Law Center
ONE Northside
Parole Illinois
Party for Socialism and Liberation Champaign-Urbana
People's Action
Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation
Pretrial Justice Institute
Quad Cities Democratic Socialists of America
Quad Cities Interfaith
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC-IL)
Resistor Sisterhood
Restore Justice
Revolution Workshop
Rights and Restoration Law Group
Rockford Urban Ministries
Sanctuary of the People, UIUC
SEIU Healthcare Illinois
She Votes Illinois
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Chicago
Silver Law Office PC
Smart Decarceration Project
St Francis Xavier Metro-East Small Faith Community
Students for Sensible Drug Policy
The Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression
The Coalition to Reduce Recidivism in Lake County
The Fountain
The Graduate Employees' Organization at UIUC, AFT/IFT Local 6300
The Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition
The Illinois Prisoner Rights Coalition
The People's Lobby

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www.endmoneybond.org
Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois
Trinity United Church of Christ
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of IL
Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois
United Congregations of the Metro East
United Working Families
Uptown People's Law Center
Wayman AME Church
West Suburban IL DSA
Westside Justice Center
WIN Recovery
Women's Justice Institute (WJI)
Women's March Rockford
YWCA Elgin
YWCA McLean County
YWCA of the University of Illinois