

State's Attorney Dan Wright
Sangamon County State's Attorney's Office
200 S Ninth St, Rm 402
Springfield, IL 62701

December 19, 2022

Dear States Attorney Wright,

As faith leaders from Sangamon County, we are calling on you to withdraw your lawsuit seeking to invalidate the Pretrial Fairness Act. This groundbreaking legislation was supported by thousands of Illinoisans and more than 150 community, faith, legal and service organizations. Together, we have worked to make the end of monetary bond a reality in Illinois and we are dismayed that you are participating in efforts to stop this law from going into effect.

As people of faith, we understand that justice and equity are essential to building the world we want to live in. For too long, people have been jailed, away from their families, jobs, and communities, based only on the amount of money they have. The practice of requiring someone to buy their freedom, based solely on an accusation, is immoral and fundamentally unfair. It reduces our neighbors' humanity to the amount of money in their bank accounts. When we continue these unjust practices, we fail to respect the dignity and sacredness of every human life.

The harm of the money bond system reaches far beyond the individual who is put behind bars, and deeply affects their families and communities. The loved ones of people who are jailed pretrial lose caretakers, parents, and providers. These harms fall heaviest on Black and Brown communities and on the poor, who have been disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system. Repairing these deep and long-standing injustices is central to our faith.

This is why so many faith leaders joined advocates and legislators from across the state to help pass the Pretrial Fairness Act. It will ensure that jail is only used after careful consideration of each person's circumstances and the specifics of what they are accused of, not simply because a person is too poor to buy their freedom. The Pretrial Fairness Act will make Sangamon County a more just and equitable place.

Across the state, other prosecutors have voiced that they are ready to effectively implement the Pretrial Fairness Act, and have participated in good faith in working groups and negotiations to plan for January 1st. We are dismayed that you have instead chosen to join lawsuits that seek to obstruct and delay these needed reforms. As your constituents, we urge you to reject these lawsuits and join court officials, other prosecutors, and everyday Illinoisans around the state in celebrating the end of money bond, rather than trying to continue this unjust system.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Cary L. Beckwith, Pastor, Grace United Methodist Church, Springfield, IL

The Rev. Susan Phillips, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Springfield, IL

Dr. Glenn Walton, Director, Optionsss Outreach Ministries, Inc, Springfield, IL

Pastor Silas Johnson, Pastor, Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, Springfield, IL

Pastor CC Doss, Pastor, Love Deliverance Evangelistic Church, Springfield, IL

Rev. Martin Woulfe, Pastor, Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Church, Springfield, IL (and
President of the Faith Coalition for the Common Good)

Sister Maureen O'Connor, OSF, Provincial Superior, Hospital Sisters of St. Francis,
Springfield, IL

Rev. Charles S. Goodman, Pastor/Head of staff, Hope Presbyterian Church, Springfield, IL

Rev. Meredith Manning Brown, Lead Pastor, Douglas Avenue United Methodist Church,
Springfield, IL

Bishop Mary Keldermans, Pastor, Holy Family Inclusive Catholic Community, Springfield, IL

The Rev. Dr. Blythe Denham Kieffer, Pastor and Head of Staff, Westminster Presbyterian
Church, Springfield, IL

Sr. Marilyn Jean Runkel, Springfield Dominican Sisters, Springfield, IL