September 13, 2023

Morgan County State’s Attorney Gray Noll
President, Illinois State's Attorneys Association
Morgan County Courthouse, Third Floor
300 West State Street
Jacksonville, IL 62650

Sent via email

Re: Implementation of the Pretrial Fairness Act

Dear State’s Attorney Noll:

The 80 undersigned faith, policy, advocacy, legal, and community organizations write to call on you to work with your fellow court stakeholders to properly implement the Pretrial Fairness Act on September 18th. With the court cases behind us, elected officials and court actors in all counties have a responsibility to work together for the good of all Illinoisans. Any further attempts to undermine the Pretrial Fairness Act would dismiss the will of the people and jeopardize public safety.

This law was supported by people across our state, passed by our legislature, and signed into law by our governor because wealth-based jailing is one of the most flagrant injustices in our criminal legal system. For decades, Illinois has locked up tens of thousands of people, not because they posed a threat to others, but only because they were poor. This practice has disproportionately impacted people of color in Illinois, particularly low-income Black people. The money bond system extracted millions of dollars from our state’s Black, Brown, and poor residents, causing them to lose their homes, jobs, and custody of their children.

Some members of your association have opposed this legislation and spread misinformation about it from the moment it was introduced and have continued to engage in fear-mongering about its impact even after it was upheld by our highest court. Others have supported this reform from the beginning, while more came to the table to collaborate on making modifications in the trailer bill. Some prosecutors have acknowledged your collective responsibility to abide by the law in the wake of the recent ruling. Every member of the State’s Attorneys Association has a responsibility to call on its members to cease all continued attempts to deliberately obstruct the law’s implementation. Ample time and space was provided to craft this policy and prepare to enact it—now it’s time to put differences aside to protect community safety and the rights of those harmed and those accused.

Every Illinoisan deserves a court system that follows both the letter and the spirit of the law. This is true whether they reside in a large or small county, in an urban or rural setting, are seeking protection from someone who has caused them harm, or are providing for their family while mounting their legal defense. The Pretrial Fairness Act is not a suggestion or guideline—it is a law that was crafted thoughtfully over many years and has now been duly enacted or upheld by all three branches of our state government. Elected officials and court actors in all counties have a sworn duty to adhere to this law.
We are committed to bringing a fairer system to our state through the successful implementation of the Pretrial Fairness Act, and we ask that you join in the collective effort to bring about the safety and justice that everyone in our state deserves. Our Network intends to closely monitor the implementation of the law across the state. As we did throughout the process of the Supreme Court working groups and in negotiating the trailer bill, we stand ready to participate in good-faith discussions with stakeholders committed to effectively implementing the law. We welcome additional discussion on how we can jointly ensure successful implementation of the Pretrial Fairness Act. Please reach out to us at info@endmoneybond.org to schedule a conversation or reply to this letter.

Sincerely,

Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice and supporting organizations:

33rd Ward Working Families
A Just Harvest
ACLU of Illinois
American Friends Service Committee - Chicago
Apna Ghar, Inc.
Ascend Justice
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago
BlackRoots Alliance
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
BUILD, Inc.
CAIR Chicago
Champaign County Bailout Coalition
Change Peoria
Chicago Abortion Fund
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE)
Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts
Chicago Community Bond Fund
Chicago Council of Lawyers
Chicago United Solidarity Project
Children's Best Interest Project
Coalition Legal
Color of Change
Community Renewal Society
Concerned Citizens of Precinct #12
Criminal Justice Task Force at First Unitarian Church of Chicago
Elliott Counseling Group
Equality Illinois
Faith Coalition for the Common Good
Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project
First Defense Legal Aid
First United Methodist Church of Oak Park
Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice
Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
Illinois Aging Together
Illinois Alliance for Reentry & Justice
Illinois Black Advocacy Initiative
Illinois Harm Reduction & Recovery Coalition
Illinois NOW
Illinois Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism (RAC-IL)
Impact for Equity
Indivisible Chicago - South Side
JCUA
John Howard Association
JOLT Foundation
Law Enforcement Action Partnership
League of Women Voters Illinois
Live Free Illinois
Loevy & Loevy Attorneys at Law
Lucy Parsons Labs
Mujeres Latinas en Accion
National Lawyers Guild of Chicago
Nikkei Uprising
Northside Transformative Law Center
Palenque LSNA
Parole Illinois
Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation
Pretrial Justice Institute
Prison Policy Initiative

www.endmoneybond.org
Pushing Envelopes Chicago
Resistor Sisterhood
Restore Justice
Revolution Workshop
Rockford Urban Ministries
She Votes Illinois
Silver Law Office PC
SisterReach Illinois
Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL)
Students for Sensible Drug Policy
Texas Jail Project

The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence
The People's Lobby
The Porchlight Collective SAP
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois
United Congregations of the Metro East
Uptown People's Law Center
Urbana-Champaign Reproductive Justice
Women's Justice Institute
YWCA Champaign County
YWCA Southwestern Illinois

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