



Coalition to End Money Bond

September 14, 2023

[REDACTED]
118 N. Clark St., Room 537
Chicago, IL 60602

Sent via email to [REDACTED]

Re: Reduction of the use of pretrial electronic monitoring

Dear [REDACTED]

We, the undersigned 61 community, legal, policy organizations and service providers collectively represent thousands of people from communities across Cook County. Our organizations have represented and supported countless individuals subjected to pretrial house arrest with electronic monitoring and have researched best pretrial practices across the country. **We are writing to urge you to act upon the recommendations included in the [Electronic Monitoring Review](#) commissioned by the Cook County Justice Advisory Council in 2020, especially the call to reduce the use of pretrial electronic monitoring.** It is essential that advocates and communities directly impacted by electronic monitoring are included in this process and that the transition plan adheres to the [Principles for Respecting the Rights of Individuals on Pretrial Electronic Monitoring in Cook County](#), which have been endorsed by 58 organizations and 23 public officials and agencies.

Cook County is home to some of the nation's largest pretrial electronic monitoring programs. When the Electronic Monitoring Review was conducted, there were nearly nine times as many people on pretrial electronic monitoring in Cook County as there were in the entire state of New Jersey, which has dramatically reduced its use of pretrial incarceration without seeing an increase in missed court dates or rearrests. Since implementing General Order 18.8A in 2017, Cook County has jailed some 10,000 fewer people each year [without an increase in rearrest rates or missed court dates](#). New Jersey's experience similarly shows that such a reduction in pretrial incarceration can be safely achieved *without* relying on electronic monitoring.

The \$35 million spent on Cook County's two pretrial electronic monitoring programs annually is of particular concern because [there is no evidence showing that this technology improves community safety](#). The Electronic Monitoring Review found that electronic monitoring had "no substantial effect on failure to appear rates and rearrest rates, or on rearrest rates for violent crimes." [A 2021 study](#) by Chicago Applesseed Center for Fair Courts showed that people on electronic monitoring have the same extremely low rates of re-arrest as people who are released pretrial without monitors.

Pretrial electronic monitoring also disproportionately impacts Black residents of Cook County. Less than 25% of Cook County is Black, while nearly 75% of the people on electronic monitoring are Black. In 2020, the Cook County Board of Commissioners—including twelve of you serving on the Board today—voted in support of the [Justice for Black Lives resolution](#), which acknowledged decades of disinvestment in Black communities and the harm mass incarceration has caused. Electronic monitoring destabilizes the lives of people surveilled under the technology and their families. Due to the extreme restrictions placed of Cook County Sheriff’s electronic monitoring, many people have difficulty securing and maintaining employment. This makes it hard for them to pay for rent and basic necessities, and they are routinely denied the ability to leave their homes to go to the grocery store, doctor’s appointments, and laundromat. The extreme rate at which Black residents are placed on house arrest exacerbates the pervasive community safety, public health, and economic crises many of our most marginalized communities are already experiencing.

It is our hope that Cook County will act swiftly in this urgent effort to reduce the use of pretrial electronic monitoring. As the County begins planning for the future of this technology's use, we offer our member organizations’ expertise as a resource. We would appreciate the opportunity to review the Guidelines for Electronic Monitoring in Cook County with you and to connect you with people who have experienced this technology first-hand. If you are interested in this collaboration, please contact us at info@endmoneybond.org.

Sincerely,

The Coalition to End Money Bond and supporting organizations:

33rd Ward Working Families	Community Renewal Society
A Just Harvest	Dignidad, Brandeis University
Access Living	Erie Neighborhood House
Apna Ghar, Inc.	Faith Coalition for the Common Good
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Chicago	Gay Liberation Network
Believers Bail Out	Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
Black Lives Matter Blono	Illinois Alliance for Reentry & Justice
Books to Prisoners in Urbana	Illinois Black Advocacy Initiative
Cabrini Green Legal Aid	Justice and Witness Ministry of the Chicago
Cannabis Equity Illinois Coalition	Metropolitan Association of the
Chicago Abortion Fund	Illinois Conference of the
Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts	United Church of Christ
Chicago Community Bond Fund	Liberation Library
Chicago Community Jail Support	Live Free Illinois
Chicago Council of Lawyers	Loop Church Chicago
Chicago United Solidarity Project	Lucy Parsons Labs
Children's Best Interest Project	Mandel Legal Aid Clinic of the University of
Clergy for a New Drug Policy	Chicago Law School
Color of Change	MediaJustice
Color of Equity	National Lawyers Guild of Chicago

Nehemiah Trinity Rising
Nikkei Uprising
Organized Communities Against Deportations
Parole Illinois
Prison Policy Initiative
Pushing Envelopes Chicago
Represent Justice
Restore Justice
Rockford Urban Ministries
Saint Leonard's Ministries
Sana Healing Collective
Sentencing Advocacy Group of Evanston
She Votes Illinois
Shriver Center on Poverty Law

Social Service Workers United Chicago
Students for Sensible Drug Policy
TASC, Inc. (Treatment Alternatives for Safe
Communities)
The People's Lobby
Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois
United Church of Rogers Park
United States Palestinian Community Network
Uptown People's Law Center
West Town Law Office
Youth Empowerment Performance Project
(YEPP)
YWCA McLean County