Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice

October 8th, 2025

The Honorable [redacted]
Cook County Commissioner, [redacted] District
118 N. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60602
Sent via email to [redacted]

Re: Communities Call to Protect Social Services & Freeze Law Enforcement Spending

Dear Commissioner [redacted],

In the last year, the Trump administration has taken unprecedented action to dismantle institutions and programs benefiting marginalized communities, cut funding for essential social services, and pull back funds allocated to states and local jurisdictions. These cuts jeopardize public safety and risk reversing the incredible progress Cook County has made in reducing community violence.

The undersigned 68 community, faith, policy, and service-providing organizations write to call on you and your fellow commissioners to protect funding for essential services like violence prevention, behavioral health, and community investment to reduce intra-community violence. You can support these services by freezing law enforcement spending, which is already far above the levels set when there were many more people in jail and many more criminal cases being processed by our court system.

Over the last decade, Cook County has made tremendous progress in reducing pretrial jailing and improving community safety. This has been a byproduct of both moving away from racist policies promoting mass incarceration and strategically investing in expansions to the social safety net and community-based violence prevention programs. With the Trump administration gutting many of the federal programs aimed at supporting the neighborhoods most at risk of community violence, it is essential that Cook County not only avoid cutting budgets for these programs but also increase investments.

We believe that Cook County can protect and increase essential health and human service spending by freezing all spending for law enforcement. Despite the nearly 40% decrease in the number of people incarcerated in the Cook County Jail, the Cook County Department of Corrections budget has not seen a reduction that coincides with that change in responsibility. Similarly, the budget for the State's Attorney's Office grew tremendously over the last decade, even as both the number of case filings and crime rates continued to decrease. It is important to

note that while the federal government has cut hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for essential social services, law enforcement spending has unjustifiably increased.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge President Trump's authoritarian attacks on residents of Cook County. Over the last several weeks, there have been repeated threats to the safety of our community members through executive orders targeting people without homes or who have mental health needs. Numerous federal law enforcement agencies have been dispatched to make arrests and deport our neighbors. It is essential at this moment that Cook County expand investments to ensure adequate support of community members targeted by the actions of the Trump administration and everyone impacted by its reduced funding for resources that allow marginalized people to live safe and healthy lives. The County's investment must include increasing the budget of the Public Defender's Office, which is responsible for defending increasing numbers of Cook County residents facing both criminal charges and immigration removal proceedings.

Cook County must protect its important progress increasing community safety and reducing pretrial jailing from a federal administration that has made clear that it does not care about our most vulnerable residents. **Please stand strong for community safety by freezing law enforcement spending to protect essential health and human service investments and expand support for Public Defense.**

Sincerely,

The Cook County members of the Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice and supporting organizations:

A Just Harvest
A Midwest Movement Project
Access Living
Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment | AFIRE
Apna Ghar, Inc.
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago
Beyond Legal Aid
BlackRoots Alliance
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
Cannabis Equity IL Coalition
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation | CAASE
Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts
Chicago Community Bond Fund
Chicago Therapy Collective
Chicago Torture Justice Center
Chicago United for Equity
Chicago United Solidarity Project | CUSP
Chicago Urban League
Chicago Votes
Children's Best Interest Project
Circles & Ciphers
Color Of Change
Community Renewal Society
Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project | FLAP
First Defense Legal Aid
HANA Center

Illinois Alliance for Reentry and Justice
Illinois National Organization for Women
Illinois Prison Project
Illinois Social Justice Alliance
Impact for Equity
Indivisible Chicago-South Side
Inside Out Network
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
KAN-WIN
Legal Council for Health Justice
Liberation Library
Lucy Parsons Labs
Mamas Activating Movements for Abolition & Solidarity | MAMAS
Muslim Civic Coalition
NAMI Cook County North Suburban
National Lawyers Guild Chicago
Nehemiah Trinity Rising
Nikkei Uprising
Northwestern University Graduate Workers
Pretrial Justice Institute
Restore Justice
Revolution Workshop
Sana Healing Collective
Saving Our Urban Leaders
Sentencing Advocacy Group of Evanston
She Votes Illinois
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
SisterReach Illinois
Southsiders Organizing for Unity and Liberation | SOUL
Stick Talk
TASC, Inc.
The People's Lobby
The Puerto Rico Project
To Defend If Necessary
Trinity United Church of Christ
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois
Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois
Uptown People's Law Center
West Town Law Office
Wolf Pack Therapy
Youth Empowerment Performance Project