

To: Oklahoma County Sheriff P.D. Taylor
From: Coalition for Immigration Justice
Date: January 6, 2020
Re: Demands



Sheriff Taylor,

As you are aware, over 150 Oklahomans, including survivors and families of victims of the Oklahoma County Jail, gathered on New Year's Day to protest the immoral, inhumane, and unconstitutional conditions and practices therein. This is not the first demonstration to protest the inadequate performance of the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Department; yet, the abuses persist. As a result, the relationship and trust between the citizens of Oklahoma and the Sheriff's Department have deteriorated severely. You exhibit no regard or respect for restorative justice. You have made no efforts to practice community-based policing and leadership in your capacity as Sheriff, and the historic atrocities at the Oklahoma County Jail continue to mount. It is well beyond time the Sheriff's Department assumes the moral and ethical standards of the times. In response to further deceit and the absence of a constructive effort to resolve our communities' concerns, we will escalate our engagement with Oklahoma County in the full exercise of our rights and resources. We cannot and will not accept the status quo you seek to perpetuate, and we will not let the false statements the Sheriff's Department continues to make to deceive the public go unchallenged.

The U.S. justice system purports to rehabilitate offenders by incarceration. Nowhere in America is its failure more clear than at the Oklahoma County Jail. It is ground-zero for constitutional violations against persons who are incarcerated. Inhumane treatment is not rehabilitative but a form of intentional violence and negligence. Research unequivocally reveals

that incarceration compounds the societal and systemic causes of criminal behavior. Restorative justice demands we aspire to mass liberation in the construction of a just, equitable and safe society - the antithesis of our current state of mass incarceration. Our community is committed to and is capable of achieving the rehabilitation and redemption of persons who are presently a danger to themselves or others, and we are entitled to leaders who embrace these values. Officials tasked with the custody and care of such persons must understand, appreciate, and employ the principles of restorative justice in their work. Presently, the Oklahoma County Jail serves to exacerbate the very conditions that give rise to a person's need for rehabilitation. It has become a key gear of the profit-engineering, mass incarceration machine that is the Oklahoma and U.S. judicial system today. But, progress can be made quickly. The following reflects the moral standards and expectations common to our community.

1. COLLABORATION WITH ICE: ICE officers should not be stationed in the Oklahoma County Jail, or any jail, regardless of whether an official agreement exists. ICE is a Federal agency with limited accountability, notorious for inhumane treatment and frequent error. Oklahoma County taxpayers should not be funding this Federal agency. The District Attorney's opinion does not support this, contrary to multiple statements made by the Sheriff's Department.

2. INHUMANE CONDITIONS: It is unconscionable that persons who are incarcerated in the County Jail do not have access to clean drinking water, proper medical care, daily showers, adequate feminine hygiene products, a clean and safe facility, and other basic human necessities.

3. CHILDREN AT THE JAIL: All juveniles should be removed immediately from the County Jail and referred back to the juvenile justice center. Knowingly, willingly, and forcefully maintaining children in unsanitary, deplorable, violent, and inhumane conditions is child abuse and neglect.

4. TRANSPARENCY: The Sheriff must fully respect and honor the rights of the public to access public records in a timely manner. All jail contracts, commissary accounts, and a daily roster of those incarcerated in the County Jail, detailing immigration detainees, the status of conviction, length of detention, and more should be fully and readily available to members of the public.

5. FOR-PROFIT SYSTEMS: The purpose and nature of a jail (or any judicial institution) precludes any and all for-profit instruments. As inmates are involuntarily incarcerated, any efforts to garner a profit at their expense is immoral and exploitative. Cash bail must be prohibited. A fair and open process for solicitation and selection of contractors must be

installed. Commissary is not a profit engine. Telephone services are not a profit engine. Health care at the jail is not a profit engine. The Jail Trust cannot seek to privatize or expand its revenue at the expense of the incarcerated and their families.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY: Jail employees found responsible for tortious or criminal acts, including abuse, negligence, and wrongful death must be held accountable.

7. PROGRESS: All Jail staff and administration must receive consistent and regular training and counseling that seeks to reform the decades-old, inhumane culture that pervades the operation of the jail. The dehumanizing treatment of persons who are incarcerated, made to suffer illness, indignity, squalor, retribution, assault, battery, injury, and death must cease to exist.

Please review the aforementioned demands, expectations, and articulation of our moral convictions. Recent and historic patterns predicated further misleading and false statements to come in response. We will never cease to be taken aback by such unethical and unbecoming behavior from elected officials. We will continue to challenge such harmful tactics at their every emergence.

Signed:

Dream Action Oklahoma
American Indian Movement - Indian Territory
Black Lives Matter - Oklahoma City
Women's March - Oklahoma
Ending Violence Everywhere
The Oklahoma Call for Reproductive Justice
N.A.A.C.P. of Oklahoma City
Democratic Socialists of America - Oklahoma City

cc: Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office
Oklahoma County Board of Commissioners
Oklahoma County Criminal Justice Authority ("Jail Trust")
Oklahoma County Detention Center Transition Committee