

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Monday, March 30, 2020

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The logo for Safe & Just Michigan is a blue rectangle with the text "Safe & Just" in white, bold, sans-serif font, and "Michigan" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it.

**Safe & Just**  
Michigan

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*Statement from Safe & Just Michigan Executive Director John Cooper  
on Gov. Whitmer's COVID-19 jails and juvenile detention centers  
order:*

"We are very pleased to see Gov. Gretchen Whitmer act decisively to limit the potential spread of COVID-19 in prisons, jails and juvenile facilities as the state responds to this ongoing public health crisis. Correctional facilities are confined, communal spaces that pose special risks of the spread of COVID-19 not only to incarcerated people, but to staff and the surrounding community as well. Steps to reduce intake to correctional facilities and expedite releases from them are important to managing these risks, as are heightened sanitation protocols, and we believe that this executive order will ultimately help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.

"However, there is more that can be done to lower risks — particularly within the prison system, which has seen infections of inmates and staff reported at a number of facilities in recent days. Michigan Department of Corrections officials have been proactive and transparent about notifying the public of these developments and in detailing the steps being taken to mitigate risk within Michigan's prisons; however, releases — whether through parole or commutation — have not been part of the department's mitigation strategy to date. We encourage the governor's office to work with the parole board and MDOC administration to identify good candidates for release in Michigan's prisons and expedite releases as part of the state's broader COVID-19 containment strategy."

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Safe & Just Michigan ([www.safeandjustmi.org](http://www.safeandjustmi.org)) works to advance policies that end Michigan's over-use of incarceration and promote community safety and healing. We partner with Michigan organizations and leaders from across the political spectrum, including business and community leaders, faith communities, crime survivor organizations, formerly incarcerated individuals, prisoners and their families, as well as Michigan taxpayers statewide.