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June 19, 2017

Commissioner Todd Portune
Commissioner, President of the Board
County Administration Building
138 East Court Street
Room 603
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Sheriff Jim Neil
Hamilton County Sheriff
1000 Sycamore Street
#100
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Commissioner Portune and Sheriff Neil,

The ACLU of Ohio recently became aware of Hamilton County's growing concerns regarding the overpopulation of the Justice Center. I am writing on behalf of the ACLU to offer our assistance in combating the overcrowding of Hamilton County's jail facilities, by recommending changes to the County's pretrial criminal justice process and helping to implement reform measures aimed at reducing the size of the County's jail population.

Recent studies show that across the country, approximately sixty-percent (60%) of jail populations are comprised of persons being held on pretrial status. *Bail Fail: Why the U.S. Should End the Practice of Using Money for Bail*, Justice Policy Institute, September 2012. In many instances these people are in jail simply because they cannot afford the high costs of money bail. A person's inability to afford bail has no bearing on his or her guilt or innocence, or the person's likelihood of failing to appear or posing a threat to the public. Many of these individuals may spend days or weeks in jail unnecessarily, often leading to a loss in employment, housing, and financial hardship for their families.

Further, it is estimated that counties across the country spend, on average, $9 billion housing pretrial detainees, and have experienced a surge in jail overcrowding. Eric Holder, "Attorney General Eric Holder Speaks at the National Symposium on Pretrial Justice," June 1, 2011, U.S. Department of Justice, http://www.justice.gov/iso/opa/ag/speeches/2011/ag-speech-110601.html. Ohio is not unique—we know that the expansion of people held pretrial has contributed to jail overcrowding

throughout the country. This is why the ACLU of Ohio has embarked on a campaign to reform Ohio's money bail systems.

The ACLU of Ohio, together with a coalition of partners across the state, is dedicated to reforming Ohio's money bail practices and implementing more effective and cost-saving measures to replace money bail as the state's primary mechanism for release. As part of this effort, we intend to work closely with officials in Ohio's largest and most populated counties to study and implement reform. To date, the ACLU of Ohio is already working with a coalition of county judges, prosecutors, public defenders, law professors, and other interested community members in Cuyahoga County. We would similarly welcome the opportunity to work with a coalition community members and officials in Hamilton County on these issues.

Accordingly, we would like to set up a time to meet with you both (in addition to any other interested officials, judges, and community members) to discuss bail reform and how it can ultimately lead to a reduction in the County's jail population.

We look forward to hearing from you. Please do not hesitate to call or email with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Hill, Esq.
Policy Counsel
ACLU of Ohio
[redacted]

Mike Brickner
Senior Policy Director
ACLU of Ohio
[redacted]