

Middlesex County Sheriff reduces jail population by 25% amid coronavirus crisis

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State House News Service

Electronic monitoring, bail review decisions and a decline in new arrests are among the reasons behind a nearly 25 percent reduction in the jail population in Middlesex County, Sheriff Peter Koutoujian announced Monday.

“On March 12, we had 787 people either sentenced or awaiting trial,” the sheriff said in a statement. “Today, we have 594.”

A recent high court ruling allowed certain individuals to revisit their bail conditions if they are being held on a pre-trial detention basis, and the jail population has also declined due to scheduled releases of sentenced individuals. The smaller population of incarcerated individuals has enabled the temporary closure of a fourth dorm-style housing unit and Koutoujian’s office says that move, combined with the lower jail population, has “allowed for an enhancement of social distancing practices” in the Middlesex Jail & House of Correction.

“The decisions we are making and the steps we are taking are focused on ensuring the safety of those in our custody, our staff and the communities we serve,” said Koutoujian. “We will not waiver from our commitment to meeting those objectives.”