

Statement from Bristol DA Quinn Regarding ACLU/CPCS Petition for Mass Release of Inmates

The following is a statement from Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III

“A petition filed by the ACLU and CPCS has requested the mass release of thousands of defendants, many of whom are dangerous individuals and career criminals. For reasons of public safety and common sense, I strongly oppose this petition.

Seven of the 11 district attorneys, the Massachusetts Office of Victims Assistance, the trial court, local police departments and others have all filed an opposition to the petition.

□

I am very mindful of the serious public health crisis that is afflicting our country.

I am concerned for everyone’s welfare, especially our heroic medical workers, grocery employees, first responders and anyone putting themselves in danger for the public good.

I am very concerned about the well-being of the thousands of victims whose rights would be violated by the mass release of thousands of individuals from our jails and prisons. This would jeopardize both their physical and mental well-being, especially in cases of domestic violence.

We need to make rational decisions so that there are not grave, unintended consequences from rash and ill-conceived decisions.

Correctional facilities have implemented stringent protocols to protect inmates and staff from the Coronavirus. As of this writing, no one has tested positive in the Bristol County jails. These facilities have dealt with significant health-related issues in the past and have the expertise and experience to protect the inmates.

We are now receiving a number of motions for the release of very dangerous defendants who have no business being out on the street. While I am concerned for everyone's welfare, this appears to be an attempt to manipulate this serious public health crisis to obtain their release from jail.

Ensuring public safety is my primary duty. It is a duty that underlies all government action. I will continue to review cases on an individual basis, but I am strongly opposed to the wholesale release of defendants who are properly in custody. Releasing many defendants to the street is against the public interest and should not be done in a society based on the rule of law. □”