



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE
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THOMAS M. HODGSON
SHERIFF

April 6, 2020

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

As someone who has used their legislative position to demonize Sheriffs and our federal partners for enforcing our national immigration laws, and who consistently advocates for criminal illegal aliens, I find it outrageous that you would be writing a lengthy letter suggesting I encourage Immigrations and Customs Enforcement to release detainees. The people you are suggesting be released are the same lawbreakers you have repeatedly described as victims and defended as a special group of people who should not be accountable for violating the immigration laws of the United States.

The fact that you have cited detainee claims of “alarming” conditions at the Bristol County ICE detention facility as part of your justification for release is nothing short of absurd and irresponsible. In fact, your decision not to take the time to call me to inquire about the validity of the claims suggests strongly that your efforts are motivated by political expediency and misguided advocacy. Your record of placing more credibility with lawbreakers rather than those who enforce the laws created by Congress makes clear where your interests truly lie.

Part of your rationale for releasing detainees centers around the fact that we cannot confirm no one in our custody has COVID-19 because we haven’t tested any inmates or detainees, even though none are symptomatic. If in fact your assumption is correct, why would you suggest we release anyone into our neighborhoods and expose our citizens to greater risks?

We have direct evidence of certain detainees who are promoting a misinformation campaign inside the facility with the assistance of political activist attorneys and ministers. These instigators are funneling money to the ringleader and urging attorneys to smuggle contraband into the facility.

We are well aware of the efforts of these activists to undermine our mission to enforce the law and protect our citizens and legal residents while also holding lawbreakers accountable. Your activism as a lawmaker to encourage non-compliance with the laws created by Congress, rather than using your legislative authority to change the law, undermines the safety of my staff and our partners in law enforcement.

The most troubling part of your unsubstantiated argument is the insulting and outrageous suggestion that officials at the Bristol County Sheriff's Office and ICE would intentionally not test for COVID-19 to avoid turning up positive results.

Such a suggestion is shameful and unbecoming of a member of the United States Congress.

Since I do not expect a call from you to seek out the facts relating to our long-established protocols for disease control in our facilities, I will include information that may be useful in helping you to create real solutions based on the realities.

The assertions you have included about alarming conditions are not true. We disinfect our entire facility several times per day. Detainees initiated a work stoppage for 24 hours and resumed work thereafter. What you failed to note was that of the 120 detainees in our detention center, only 52 were participating in the work stoppage, and those participating were led by two instigators we have identified.

Lastly, I will continue to work with the health professionals, Centers for Disease Control, and our federal, state, and local governments to manage through this unprecedented time in our nation's history. The seriousness of this pandemic has no place for private agendas attempting to influence public policy. Particularly, when such uninformed interference raises the risks of harm to those we are dedicated to protect.

I have no intentions of encouraging ICE to release detainees and strongly suggest, based on your lack of information, that you do not either.

In the future, please feel free to call me or to visit the Bristol County Sheriff's Office before pursuing initiatives relating to my duly elected role as Sheriff.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Hodgson
Sheriff

TMH/bnc