



DANE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ISMAEL R. OZANNE



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

Date: 03-26-2020

DANE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY WORKS WITH SHERIFF TO PROTECT VICTIMS AND TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC SAFETY

Working with the Dane County Judges, the Dane County District Attorney's Office has made extraordinary efforts in the past few weeks to reduce the population of the Dane County Jail. There are currently approximately 549 persons being held at the Dane County Jail. There are a number of defendants who are on cash bail set by Dane County Judges and court commissioners. We are working to review these cases. The vast majority of defendants are not held in jail prior to trial.

For years, Dane County's Criminal Justice System has been a national leader in criminal justice reform. The reason why Dane County does not have a substantial number of people detained on cash bail prior to trial is because of leadership by the Dane County Executive, the County Board, and judges, and because of the participation of community members, community organizations, and law enforcement officers in examining how the criminal justice system can protect public safety while honoring the rights of defendants and working to divert people from the criminal justice system. As part of my commitment to these reforms, I have expanded diversion programming, I have stopped prosecuting low-level marijuana cases as crimes, and I have trained all of my staff on racial equity issues.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, prosecutors in my office have reviewed every case where a defendant is held on bail to determine if that remains appropriate considering the pandemic. The defendants remaining on cash bail are among the most serious, persistent criminals in our community. Many of these defendants are accused of crimes such as sexual assaults, homicides, burglaries, car thefts, and crimes of serious domestic violence.

The Dane County Sheriff has a long track record of deeply caring about the well-being of inmates in the Dane County Jail. At the same time, protection of the public demands that we not release anti-social dangerous criminals unfettered back into a community that has already been disrupted by the pandemic. Therefore, my office will continue to work with the Sheriff and judges to protect crime victims and the public while also making reasonable decisions about releasing defendants from the Dane County Jail.

If victims have concerns about a defendant's status, they can sign up through the Victim Information and Notification for Offender Custody status (VINE) notification system by calling 1-877-418-8463 or by visiting www.vinelink.com.

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