

The Honorable Toni Preckwinkle  
Cook County Board President  
118 N. Clark Street – Rm. 537  
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Dear President Preckwinkle,

I write today to urge you and other Cook County officials to **reduce the number of people held in jail** as much as possible in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

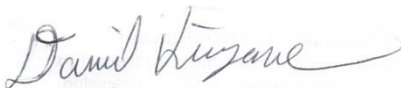
Hundreds of detainees and hundreds of correctional officers and staff have been diagnosed with COVID-19; our jail is a hotspot for the virus, and **people who don't absolutely have to be there should be released as soon as possible.**

Many of the people currently incarcerated are there because they cannot afford to post bail. These individuals are formally innocent, and it **is unjust to expose them to risk that being incarcerated currently presents.** Others have committed low-level offenses which do not justify the kind of punishment that the risk of infection would present to them.

I am writing as a Cook County resident and as a rabbi, motivated by citizenship and Jewish values. Jewish wisdom insists that those accused of a crime receive fair and impartial treatment and that **it is immoral to expose them to physical risk**, especially when they are presumed innocent. The Torah insists: "Commit no wrongdoing in administering justice; ... with righteousness shall you judge your fellow" (Lev. 19:15). This obligation reminds us that the accused merit as much honor as anyone else, and we must take special care to safeguard them against those who would abuse their vulnerability. With this in mind, we find that it is a perversion of justice to put incarcerated people at unnecessary risk.

Therefore, I call on elected officials to dramatically reduce the number of people in Cook County jail in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, Cook County officials should **expedite bail hearings, curb new admissions jail, and release all pre-trial detainees who are qualified for bail, as well as others who have not been found to be a safety risk to someone else.**

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Daniel Kirzane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rabbi Daniel Kirzane  
Oak Park Temple  
Oak Park, IL