

Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Katie Wood
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- Organization (if any): Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression
 - City/Town: Chicago
 - State: IL
 - ZIP: 60647

Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

- County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting 4/23/2020 10a

Q3

Tell us the File ID number (example 17-0000) of the item on which you are registering your position. If you don't know the number, we can help at 312.603.6398 or cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. You can also look it up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar

COVID-19 in Cook County Jail

Q4

What do you want to do?

- PROVIDE WRITTEN COMMENT FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Q5

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov

In view of the continued spread of Coronavirus at the Cook County Jail, and Sheriff Dart's failure to provide complete and truthful information about the situation in the Jail, I am concerned that minimum standards are not being met. Three inmates have already died, others in the inmate population are staging hunger strikes due to the conditions in the Jail that the Sheriff claims do not exist. It is the responsibility of the Cook County Board of Commissioners to exercise oversight of the Cook County Jail. I urge you to make sure that the County Board closely monitors the situation in the Jail and takes responsibility for insuring: that the County maintains conditions in the Jail that will minimize the spread of the virus, that the County provides adequate treatment to detainees who contract the virus, and that the County provides the public with full and accurate information about the situation in the Jail. I hope in particular that you will insure that at its meeting this week, the County Board will fully examine: the current conditions experienced by the inmates in the Jail relating to the risk of infection and transmission of the Coronavirus among inmates and guards, the adequacy of current and planned responses to the COVID-19 crisis in the Jail, including: a. the adequacy of testing to find who has contracted the virus, b. the adequacy of supplies provided and measures undertaken to insure the cleanliness and social distancing that are required to prevent mass transmission of the virus by those in the Jail who become infected with it, and c. the adequacy of care for those who have serious cases of the virus, in Jail facilities when that is adequate from a medical perspective and by transfer of seriously ill inmates to hospitals when that is required for proper treatment, and what additional actions the County needs to take to control the spread of the Coronavirus in the Jail and to insure that all communications from County officials about the conditions in the Jail and actions being taken to address them are timely, complete and accurate. The County Board should also consider agreeing to allow court-appointed independent monitors into the Jail, as requested by the plaintiffs in the pending U.S. Federal Court proceedings in the case of Mays vs. Dart. Quite clearly intervention by the County Board is urgently needed in light of the failure of Sheriff Dart to test the inmates for the virus, his failure to meet minimum standards for the safety of inmates and guards and the public in the current circumstances, doubts about whether he is making adequate treatment available for those who become seriously ill from the virus, and his ongoing failure to provide complete

and truthful information on the conditions in the Jail. There are multiple sources of testimony available to the County Board, which it should hear and consider, about the continuing failure of the Sheriff and his staff to provide adequate cleaning supplies for the inmates and adequate care for those who become sick. On April 9, 2020 the U.S. Federal District Court for the Northern District of Illinois concluded that "intentional actions of the Sheriff enable the spread of coronavirus and significantly heighten detainees' risk of contracting the virus." Since then the Sheriff has defied the order of the Federal Court that he give a COVID-19 test to all inmates exposed to others who have tested positive for the virus. Most recently the Sheriff has been presenting misleading graphs to try to suggest that total cases are going down rather than up, as is almost certainly the case, which in any event he could not know given that as of April 16 he had only tested 10% of the inmates in the Jail. Here is a Declaration by Medical Professionals Concerned about the Spread of COVID-19 in the Cook County Jail, submitted to the Federal Court on April 3, in which five distinguished medical professionals addressed these issues: <https://cdn.buttercms.com/ecnWSXKfS9mh2rFSliqq>. They and other qualified professionals can provide County Board with any additional information that it needs to evaluate the conditions in the Jail and the actions that are required to meet the County's responsibilities to inmates, to its employees and to the public.