

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/aclu-ohio-ramps-advocacy-release-vulnerable-people-prisons-and-jails-new-television>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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COLUMBUS This weekend the ACLU of Ohio launched a series of television ads which began airing Saturday urging Governor DeWine to release elderly and medically-vulnerable people from prisons and jails. The situation is becoming increasingly urgent as Marion Prison is now reported as having one of the largest COVID-19 outbreaks in the country, with over 82% (or 2,028 people) infected by the virus, including four deaths. The ads are targeted in the Columbus market and will run through Wednesday April 29 with a heavy saturation on CNN and Fox.

Since the pandemics start, the ACLU of Ohio have filed three legal actions related to prisons and jails and have led advocacy efforts including direct engagement with government officials through multiple stakeholder letters, drafting of model policies, virtual press conferences, Twitter storms, as well as digital ad work.

COVID-19 should not be a death sentence for all who find themselves behind bars right now. Governor DeWine can and should take necessary steps to ensure this pandemic does not completely ravage Ohios prisons and jails, said **J. Bennett Guess, Executive Director for the ACLU of Ohio**. We are using every tool in our toolbox, and are now taking our case to the airwaves: we cant incarcerate our way out of this pandemic, but governors, sheriffs, prosecutors, and the president have the power, and responsibility, to save lives.

The ad is a joint effort with the Union Theological Seminary and appeals to religious and moral principles in the effort to save the lives of medically vulnerable and elderly people whose sentences are putting them at unnecessary risk for severe illness or death if contracting COVID-19.

The government has a moral and legal responsibility to care for those in its custody. Governor DeWine can still make a difference by deciding today that much broader categories of people must be released from prisons and jails to make a meaningful difference. Its a matter of life and death, added **Jocelyn Rosnick, Policy Director for the ACLU of Ohio**.

[Watch the advertisement.](#)

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