



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Superior Court orders dismissal of lawsuit calling for jail population reduction

SANTA ANA, Ca. (June 10, 2021) – The Orange County Superior Court on Thursday, June 10, ordered the dismissal of a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California (ACLU) seeking the release of hundreds of inmates due to COVID-19.

An earlier ruling in the lawsuit, filed by the ACLU in June 2020, called for a 50 percent reduction in the jail population, which could have resulted in the release of more than 1,800 inmates back into the community. Many of the inmates were in pre-trial status for, or convicted of, violent crimes. Through the combined efforts of Sheriff's Department personnel and Correctional Health Services staff, the Orange County Jail was able to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 while prioritizing public safety without releasing dangerous inmates.

"Navigating the pandemic presented challenges, but I am proud of the exceptional work of our personnel who continued to provide for the health and safety of inmates in our custody," said Sheriff-Coroner Don Barnes. "Most importantly, we accomplished this work without releasing dangerous criminal offenders and compromising public safety. This ruling validates the extraordinary innovation, diligence and dedication of custody personnel and Correctional Health Services staff."

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