



# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## City Council Unanimously Supports Orange County Sheriff's Challenge to Inmate Release

**Laguna Niguel, CA** – At a Special City Council Meeting on Tuesday, December 22, the Laguna Niguel City Council unanimously voted to authorize the City Attorney to join an amicus brief supporting Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes' challenge to a court order regarding the release of prison inmates due to COVID-19.

The Orange County Superior Court recently ordered Barnes to release approximately 50% of the County jail inmate population despite the Sheriff having plans to appropriately respond to COVID-19 issues within the jail system. If the order stands, hundreds of inmates could be released into Orange County communities in January.

"As a united City Council, our highest priority is our commitment to maintaining public safety. The proposed mass release of inmates compromises this priority and puts our great City, as well as all Orange County cities at risk", said Mayor Fred Minagar.

A large-scale release of prison inmates, as directed by the Court, poses a substantial risk to the community. Additionally, the Court's reduction mandate would essentially cap the jail population and stop intake of new inmates. As a result, cities would be unable to book arrestees into the jail.

Mayor Minagar stated, "The release of hundreds of potentially dangerous criminals throughout the County, including here in our beautiful City, is of extreme concern. The Laguna Niguel City Council wholeheartedly supports the Sheriff's appeal of the Superior Court's order and encourages other cities to consider doing the same."

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