

# Illinois has released almost 4,000 prisoners, including 64 murderers

ROCKFORD, Ill. (WTVO) — The State of Illinois has released a list of almost 4,000 inmates released from prisons, including 64 convicted of murder, since March 1st.

A list released by the state shows each inmate who had their sentence commuted by Gov. JB Pritzker or were released early by the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Police departments from all over the state of Illinois have sent a letter to Gov. JB Pritzker questioning why the governor has reduced the sentences of violent criminals and convicted murderers.

In order to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Illinois prisons, Pritzker has granted clemency to more than 1,000 prisoners, including Brian Harrington, who was convicted of killing a man in Rockford when he was 14, in 2007.

Many had their sentences commuted or were granted medical furlough. Winnebago County State's Attorney Marilyn Hite-Ross said that some inmates are being let out so quickly that she doesn't have proper time to inform victims, as is required by the Rights of Crime Victim's Act and the Illinois Constitution.

"The lack of appropriate notice to my office regarding the early release of these individuals hinders my ability to notify victims and family members in a timely manner. As Winnebago County State's Attorney, I will continue to oppose the early release and furlough of violent offenders back into the Winnebago County community," Hite Ross said Monday.

Hite Ross says her office was basically blindsided by the list of criminals out on parole, so much so, they didn't even have a chance to tell some of the victim's family members until some felons were already home.

Right now the State's Attorney's office is trying to determine, case by case, whether these violent offenders are being released due to COVID-19. Our law enforcement is joining with other agencies across the state demanding answers.

They say they were told only “non-violent” offenders would be released early, not murderers.

State Rep. John Cabello (R-Machesney Park) has also criticized the governor’s decision to release criminals, saying “The governor did this quietly, and I felt that since he decided to victimize the victim’s families again, that the least I could try to do was make sure that they knew that that murderer was out.”

Winnebago County Sheriff Gary Caruana said there is no evidence that people are safer from the virus outside of a jail cell.

He says the Winnebago County Jail has reduced its population by about 300 in recent weeks, and thinks that inmates are more than capable of following social distancing guidelines.

“The notion that the jails and prisons are not safe, well, I beg to differ,” Caruana said Tuesday. “We’re doing everything we can to keep it clean. We clean morning, noon, and night. We had a company here that did sterilization of everything.”

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Source:

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