From: [redacted]
To: BOC (BOC)
Subject: CHS Minimum Standards Hearing Testimony
Date: Monday, April 13, 2020 9:34:36 PM

Dear NYC Board of Corrections,

I would like to submit the following testimony in response to CHS's request to reduce the minimum standards of care during a global pandemic. To reduce the care given to our society's most vulnerable people in a time of crisis would be reckless and morally bereft. The BOC cannot grant CHS this request.

With a COVID-19 infection rate six times that of NYC, it is perversely sinister to suggest that the solution to this issue is to provide less care. Mr Raymond Rivera and Mr Michael Tyson died in DOC custody—completely preventable deaths had Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Brann heeded the calls of hundreds of activists and organizations like the Legal Aid Society and the Board of Corrections itself to release prisoners from DOC custody. We know that the safest place for any person to be in the middle of this pandemic is at home, not in a jail cell where social distancing is a joke.

The best way to ensure the health and safety of imprisoned people is to release them, with full medical care and housing if needed. Jail is never a healthy place to be, and is certainly not during a pandemic. The BOC must deny CHS's request and must act immediately to demand that the mayor and the DOC commissioner release all people being held in custody, starting with the people who are most at risk: the elderly, those with compromised immune systems, LGBTQ+ people, those who use drugs, and our youth. Anything less will lead to more deaths.

Thank you for your time,
Carrie Smith, Manhattan