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March 13, 2020

To: Whom it May Concern,

The Essex County judicial, executive, and corrections systems are prejudiced, flawed, antiquated, and need a complete overhaul. There is an unwritten policy in cities across the U.S. to "criminalize" homelessness. That is, to lock people up for panhandling, loitering at a transit terminal, and to sleeping on a bench. The police normally round-up these homeless men and women during periods of time in which the city attempts to allure enterprise. A "homeless round-up" is why I have been sitting in a jail in Newark, NJ for over 10 months already. I was a homeless addict and it was obvious by my appearance. The MTV Video Music Awards were coming to the Prudential Center in Newark, NJ in August 2019. This is when the police cleaned up the downtown area dramatically, arresting for reasons they otherwise would not have on any other day. Once arrested, you make a video appearance for a detention hearing. Detention is calculated by a flawed computer algorithm. If you are ordered detained, then you are instructed that the state of NJ has 90 days to indict you, and 180 days to depose of the case after indictment. It is very common to see it take many months just to return an indictment, and for an inmate to sit her for up to 5 years awaiting trial.

Essex County uses an unjust protocol when it comes to its grand jury proceedings. The proceedings are prejudiced and designed to ensure an indictment no matter the facts. Never will a prosecutor display exculpatory evidence, nor will they permit a defendant to be present during the proceedings. Therefore the only witness that is seen by the grand jury is the arresting police officer. The officer's testimony is all that is used to return a "True Bill". All of the accused are being indicted only based upon a reading of a police report. In other states this is sometimes referred to as "an indictment of information".

Now that I have been in here for 10 months I have learned about the many dysfunctions in the jail. I am bi-polar and severely mentally ill. When I entered the jail I encountered unethical delays to obtain timely mental health care. Patients trying to access care for depression or other mental health issues continue to face an obstacle course. The only way to get your medication quicker is to claim that you are suicidal, be stripped down, and put into a locked down cell to facilitate seeing a mental health professional to get your normal psychotropic medication.

Once you are evaluated, the only housing option is to place you in solitary confinement--so because I am mentally ill I am forced to be in a cell locked down for 23 hours per day. Therefore the mentally ill are required to live in conditions identical to those who have committed infractions and are locked down as a punishment.