Dear Mayor Dickens and Atlanta City Council,

On behalf of the undersigned civil rights organizations, we write to express our concern and profound disappointment regarding Atlanta’s decision to pass Ordinance No. 22-O-1632, which reverses years of progress made by the City to find cost-effective, proven solutions to protect community safety and reduce mass incarceration. In the past few years, Atlanta has made great strides in creating sensible, long-term solutions to community safety and wellness, including reform of its municipal cash bail laws and creation of a Policing Alternatives and Diversion Initiative, which provides alternatives to arrest for people struggling with problematic...
substance use, mental health conditions and/or extreme poverty. The City also developed plans to turn its jail, the Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC), into a center for equity that would instead provide services, reentry programs, and education to community members, leading Atlanta to be celebrated as a model for cities nationwide.  

In spite of these laudable efforts by the prior city administration, Atlanta has now reversed course. In August 2022, you passed and signed an ordinance allowing a lease of the Atlanta City Detention Center to the Sheriff’s Office of Fulton County, with authorization to incarcerate up to 700 people per day at the facility. This is a dangerously misguided and shortsighted decision. The Fulton County Sheriff claims that additional space is needed to alleviate overcrowding in his jails. But Fulton County’s claim of overcrowding is a manufactured crisis. During his tenure, the Fulton County Sheriff has signed leases for several other jails, while tragic reports of abuse and costly lawsuits alleging prolonged detention, neglect, and inhumane conditions multiply. Meanwhile, hundreds of people in Fulton County custody who could otherwise be released remain behind bars, as authorities fail to utilize other available tools to reduce overcrowding at Fulton County jails. This lease represents another step that, in the name of reducing suffering, will instead result in more people being locked up.

Atlanta’s lease of ACDC to Fulton County deals a serious blow to the City’s reputation as a national leader in developing innovative criminal justice solutions. As a national civil rights community, we continue to monitor this situation closely, and urge you, Mayor Dickens and the Atlanta City Council, to repeal Ordinance No. 22-O-1632.

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1 Policing Alternatives & Diversion Initiative, [https://www.atlantapad.org/](https://www.atlantapad.org/).
We would be glad to discuss this matter further. Please contact Eunice Cho, echo@aclu.org and Julian Clark, jclark@aclu.org at the American Civil Liberties Union, Fallon McClure, fmcclure@acluga.org, at the ACLU of Georgia, and Robyn Hasan, robyn@womenontherisega.org, at Women on the Rise Georgia, with any questions.

Sincerely,

A New Way of Life
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Georgia
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta
Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition, Inc
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)
CAIR Georgia
Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center
Color of Change
Community Movement Builders
Detention Watch Network
El Refugio Ministry
End Mass Incarceration Georgia Network
Equal Justice USA
Families for Freedom
Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Georgia Coalition for the Peoples Agenda
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights
Gideon's Promise
Human Rights Watch
Indivisible Georgia Coalition
Institute for the Study of Near Futures
Justice for Families
Justice Strategies
JustLeadershipUSA
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Law for Black Lives
Legal Action Center
Mijente
Multifaith Initiative to End Mass Incarceration, Georgia Chapter
Multifaith Initiative to End Mass Incarceration
National Black Women's Justice Institute (NBWJI)
National Crittenton
National Lawyers Guild
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Neighbors for Abolition
New Georgia Project
New Georgia Project Action Fund
NewLife-Second Chance Outreach, Inc.
Prison Policy Initiative
Queer Detainee Empowerment Project
Reform Georgia
Represent Justice
Safer Foundation
Showing Up For Racial Justice (SURJ)
SisterLove, Inc.
Solidaire Action
Solutions NOT Punishment Collaborative
Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (SEIRN)
Southern Center for Human Rights
Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund
StoptheDrugWar.org
The Sentencing Project
Trans(forming)
Vera Institute of Justice
VOTE-NOLA
Women on the Rise
Women Watch Afrika
Working Families Party
Zealous