

# THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON COVID-19 AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Loretta Lynch and Alberto Gonzales**

Former U.S. Attorneys General

Co-Chairs, National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice

**Moderated by Thomas Abt**

Senior Fellow, Council on Criminal Justice

Director, National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice



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# About the Council

- Launched in July 2019
- Invitational membership organization and think tank, serving as a center of gravity for policy and leadership in the criminal justice field
- Advances understanding of the criminal justice policy choices facing the nation through nonpartisan research and consensus-based task forces

# About the Commission

- Launched in July 2020 and will conclude most of its work by the end of the year
- Led by former Attorneys General Loretta Lynch and Alberto Gonzales, along with a diverse set of leaders from policing, courts, corrections, community-based organizations, academia and public health

# Evidence to Action

## Interim Recommendations

- Released in October 2020
- 33 action steps for leaders in the field to take, right now, to stop the spread of COVID-19

## Final Recommendations

- To be released December 2020
- Focused on broader, systemic reforms to improve readiness, effectiveness and fairness

# Commission Members



**Charlie Beck**  
Former Chief, LAPD



**Chief Adrian Diaz**  
Seattle Police Department



**Hon. Alberto Gonzales**  
Dean, Belmont University College  
of Law



**Sheriff Ed Gonzalez**  
Harris County, Texas (Houston)



**Mayor Eric Johnson**  
Dallas, Texas



**Tom Inglesby**  
Johns Hopkins University



**Hon. Loretta Lynch**  
Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton and Garrison

# Commission Members



**Desmond Meade**  
Florida Rights Restoration Coalition



**Hon. Tina Nadeau**  
New Hampshire Superior Court



**Melissa Nelson**  
Florida's 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit



**Colette Peters**  
Oregon Department of Corrections



**Pastor Michael McBride**  
Director, LIVE FREE



**Steven Raphael**  
Professor, UC Berkeley



**Jo-Ann Wallace**  
National Legal Aid & Defender Assn.

# Mission

1. **Assess the impact** of COVID-19 on the justice system and justice-involved populations
2. **Recommend immediate actions** to reduce the spread of the pandemic
3. **Develop a policy agenda** to improve the readiness, effectiveness, and fairness of the justice system in a post-pandemic world

# Key Principles

The Commission offered 4 guiding principles for policymakers

1. Preserve public health in addition to maintaining public safety
2. Get the facts – identify and rely on authoritative sources of scientific information
3. Be proactive – precautions and responses should meet or better yet exceed those recommended to the public at large
4. Increase equity and inclusion by improving outcomes for disproportionately impacted groups

# Recommending Action

The Commission made 7 cross-cutting recommendations for action

1. Go beyond CDC guidance to stop exponential growth
2. Communicate transparently about COVID-19 response plans, policies, and data
3. Adopt universal masking requirements for all staff and impacted populations when indoors and in close contact with others
4. Widely and frequently test staff and justice-involved populations for COVID-19 using the most reliable methods available
5. Limit contact, maximize distance, and reduce density
6. Allocate resources strategically
7. Actively engage and consider impacted communities in all decision-making

# Recommendations: Corrections

The Commission made 6 recommendations for the Corrections sector

1. Prevent COVID-19 infections from entering facilities
2. Control COVID-19 infections within facilities
3. Prevent COVID-19 infections from reentering communities
4. Prevent COVID-19 infections in community supervision
5. Protect rights, dignity, and well-being
6. Execute a communications plan

# Coronavirus Cases and U.S. Jail Population

