

**COMMUNITY OFFICE:**  
64-69 DRY HARBOR ROAD  
MIDDLE VILLAGE, NY 11379  
(718) 366-3900  
FAX: (718) 326-3549

**CITY HALL OFFICE:**  
250 BROADWAY, SUITE 1774  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
(212) 788-7381



THE COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**ROBERT HOLDEN**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 30<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT, QUEENS

CHAIR  
TECHNOLOGY

COMMITTEES  
HEALTH  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
JUVENILE JUSTICE  
MENTAL HEALTH, DISABILITIES AND ADDICTIONS

March 24, 2020

Hon. Bill de Blasio  
Mayor, City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

On behalf of the New York City Council, we are writing to bring your attention to the thousands of Correction Officers who are putting their safety on the line in city jails each and every day while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread throughout New York City.

Dozens of cases of the virus have already appeared on Rikers Island, and the only realistic way the virus could have been introduced to the island is through Correction Officers and employees, visitors and the newly incarcerated. Those who come and go daily from the prison, or who were recently taken there from the five boroughs, are the most at risk for spreading the virus in the facility and/or in the city when they leave.

In order to ensure the safety of everyone involved, and to stop the spread of COVID-19, we are requesting that the city immediately implement a testing strategy on Rikers Island to test all Correction Officers and employees. Rikers Island has ample space to set up a testing facility, and the current State and NYC contracts with BioReference labs allow for the number of tests needed and the prompt reporting of results.

In addition, we are also requesting that every person who enters the campus each day be thoroughly screened for symptoms of COVID-19 before they are allowed to proceed. With both of these measures in place, the city will be able to determine the full extent of the virus on Rikers and take the appropriate steps to remove individuals from the island to either a hospital or at-home quarantine, and keep everyone safe.

As city officials, we have an obligation to act urgently and efficiently to protect our Correction Officers, employees and incarcerated New Yorkers. We ask that you implement this plan now to avoid the further spread of the virus through Rikers Island and New York City.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Holden  
Chair, Committee on Technology  
Council Member, District 30

Keith Powers  
Chair, Committee on Criminal Justice  
Council Member, District 4

I. Daneek Miller  
Chair, Committee on Civil Service and Labor  
Council Member, District 27

Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.  
Chair, Committee on Housing and Buildings  
Council Member, District 36

Paul Vallone  
Chair, Committee on Economic Development  
Council Member, District 19

Karen Koslowitz  
Chair, Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections  
Council Member, District 29

Donovan J. Richards  
Chair, Committee on Public Safety  
Council Member, District 31

Justin Brannan  
Chair, Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts  
Council Member, District 43

Joseph C. Borelli  
Chair, Committee on Fire and Emergency Management  
Council Member, District 51

Steven Matteo  
Chair, Committee on Standards and Ethics  
Council Member, District 50

Mark Gjonaj  
Chair, Committee on Small Business  
Council Member, District 13

Ydani Rodriguez  
Chair, Committee on Transportation  
Council Member, District 10

Helen Rosenthal  
Chair, Committee on Women and Gender Equity  
Council Member, District 6

Peter Koo  
Chair, Committee on Parks and Recreation  
Council Member, District 20

Alicka Ampry-Samuel  
Chair, Committee on Public Housing  
Council Member, District 41

Margaret Chin  
Chair, Committee on Aging  
Council Member, District 1

Dr. Mathieu Eugene  
Chair, Committee on Civil and Human Rights  
Council Member, District 40

Diana Ayala  
Chair, Committee on Mental Health  
Council Member, District 8

Alan N. Maisel  
Chair, Committee on State and Federal Legislation  
Council Member, District 46

Fernando Cabrera  
Chair, Committee on Gov. Operations  
Council Member, District 14

Rafael Salamanca Jr.  
Chair, Committee on Land Use  
Council Member, District 17

Francisco Moya  
Chair, Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises  
Council Member, District 21

Adrienne E. Adams  
Chair, Subcommittee on Landmarks  
Council Member, District 28

Stephen T. Levin  
Chair, Committee on General Welfare  
Council Member, District 33

Chaim Deutsch  
Council Member, District 48  
Chair, Committee on Veterans

Eric A. Ulrich  
Council Member, District 32

Farah N. Louis  
Council Member, District 45

Andy King  
Council Member, District 12