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**STATEMENT FROM EQUIP FOR EQUALITY**  
**Saving Lives is More Important than Playing Politics**

CHICAGO – Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Corrections have committed to taking vital measures to protect our prison population and their surrounding communities during this pandemic. Those measures include releasing some individuals using individualized safety evaluations looking at multiple factors, including the crime committed, time served, age, disability and whether the person can live safely in the community. Several lawmakers are questioning the decision to release prisoners, which risks slowing the process. The Chicago Fraternal Order of Police also issued a statement condemning the commutations. While Equip for Equality and its coalition partners are fighting to save lives, these groups are slowing the process and exacerbating public health disasters.

***The following statement can be attributed to Amanda Antholt, Senior Attorney at Equip for Equality:***

“Now is not the time to slow down the process of releasing non-violent and medically fragile prisoners. We have seen the horrifying consequences of not acting swiftly. Look at the Stateville Correctional Center where cases of coronavirus exploded and overran the intensive care unit at Joliet's AMITA Health Saint Joseph Medical Center. The crisis became so bad that the National Guard was called in.

Many prisoners are more likely to experience severe health complications or death because they have disabilities, are elderly, or have underlying health conditions. For these at-risk prisoners, delaying the process is the same as sentencing them to death.”

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**About Equip for Equality**

Equip for Equality is a private, not-for-profit entity designated in 1985 by the Governor to administer the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy system for safeguarding the rights of people with disabilities in Illinois. EFE is dedicated to expanding opportunities for people with

disabilities to live full and independent lives by providing self-advocacy assistance, legal services, disability rights education, public policy advocacy and abuse investigations. For more information, go to [www.equipforequality.org](http://www.equipforequality.org).