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## Florida Returning Citizen Leaders Sound Alarm about COVID-19 Spread in Florida's Prisons

*FRRC Executive Director, Deputy Director Weigh in on 'Health Emergency'*

“There is a life or death [emergency situation](#) happening right now in the Florida prison system. Eleven Florida Department of Corrections employees have tested positive for COVID-19. We need to take action immediately to deal with this health emergency—and we do not have a second to waste,” said Desmond Meade, Executive Director of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC). “The measure of a civilized society is based upon how it treats its most vulnerable people.”

On March 17, 2020, FRRC [wrote a letter](#) to Florida Governor Ron DeSantis encouraging his administration to take immediate steps to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the state's prison system. Reiterating the suggestions outlined in the letter, FRRC is urging the Department of Corrections to immediately take whatever steps are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including separating the elderly and vulnerable from the rest of the population, and considering the immediate release of inmates with health conditions, as well as those who are within six months of officially being released.

“Every person in a prison or a jail increases the risk of spreading this virus. On behalf of the 23,000 employees, the 96,000 people currently living in a Florida prison, as well as all of their family members, we are sounding the alarm for our leaders and policy makers to take immediate action. This cannot wait another day,” said Neil Volz, Deputy Director of FRRC.

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FRRC is a grassroots, membership organization run by Returning Citizens (Formerly Convicted Persons) who are dedicated to ending the disenfranchisement and discrimination against people with convictions and creating a more comprehensive and humane reentry system that will enhance successful reentry, reduce recidivism, and increase public safety.