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Mayor Ray Nagin  
City of New Orleans  
1300 Perdido St #2E10  
New Orleans, LA 70112

Dear Mayor Nagin,

Enclosed is a report being released tomorrow, detailing the chaos that ensued at Orleans Parish Prison and DOC facilities in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. The report has been released to chronicle what OPP inmates and staff had to endure in hopes that the horrors will never be repeated. As a decision maker related to what may happen in case of a future evacuation, please read the report carefully with an eye toward protecting human lives, and ensuring public safety.

As with all systemic weaknesses exposed by Katrina, we must learn from what went wrong at Orleans Parish Prison before, during and after the hurricane and flooding. In the attached report you will see a specific platform for reform. We ask that you assist with the realization of the recommendations, more fully explained on pages 10 and 11, and summarized as follows:

- Downsize the jail by ending the practice of holding people who are serving state time.
- Implement system-wide reforms to decrease the number of pre-trial detainees held at OPP.
- Reduce the use of juvenile detention by exploring viable alternatives to detention for children.
- Appoint an Independent Monitor.
- Utilize experts to develop and implement a full set of recommendations for overall detention reform.
- Design and implement a coordinated emergency plan to ensure that all prisons and jails are capable of quickly and safely evacuating before the next disaster strikes.

The stories of the inmates and guards who were trapped in Orleans Parish Prison during Katrina are horrific. Imagine being in a locked cell, in the dark, as water with rats, feces and gasoline rose to your chest. You have the power to work for change, and to prevent this from happening again. On behalf of the 6,000+ men, women and children whose lives were endangered during and after Katrina, we ask that you use your power to protect the lives and health of the vulnerable in the future. Please give us the courtesy of a personal reply.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Katie Schwartzmann  
ACLU of Louisiana