

Commonwealth of Virginia

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX

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STEVE DESCANO
COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

03/31/2020

COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY DESCANO OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Regarding Confirmed Positive of COVID-19 in Fairfax County ADC

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA – Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano released the following statement regarding the first confirmed positive test of an inmate in the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center.

"This is an unfortunate development for our local criminal justice system. In the pursuit of justice, we always take the health and wellbeing of our community into account when making prosecutorial decisions—that includes the wellbeing of incarcerated individuals. That's why we've worked with defense counsel and judges to find alternatives to pretrial incarceration where appropriate. We've also worked closely with law enforcement and the magistrate to divert individuals exhibiting signs of COVID-19 from our jail directly to a monitored hospital stay. Additionally, we're carefully reviewing and recommending nonviolent inmates nearing the end of a sentence for early release when appropriate."

Commonwealth's Attorney Descano recently outlined a series of proactive steps his office has taken to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus while continuing to maintain prosecutorial duties. Mr. Descano's most recent step has been to review cases of those currently incarcerated but scheduled for an upcoming release.

"Ahead of this most recent development, I proactively sought and received a list from our Sheriff of inmates scheduled for release in the next 60 days. Over the past week my office has reviewed each file and determined whether or not each person on that list constitutes a threat to our community. Wherever possible, we've begun recommending the release of individuals who have adequately paid their debt to society and do not pose a threat to community safety. The COVID-19 outbreak has certainly added a layer of complexity and consideration to our processes. That's why we've worked nonstop with other partners in this system to mitigate risks to individuals across this structure."

The Commonwealth's Attorney's Office remains open for business throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

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