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May 27, 2020

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To whom it may concern:

I am requesting records on behalf of ArchCity Defenders and the general public pursuant to the Missouri Sunshine Law, Chapter 610 RSMo.

On May 26, 2020, Director of Public Safety Jimmie Edwards made a series of public statements by videoconference at an aldermanic budget hearing which were widely reported in local media. *See* Mark Schlinkmann, *About 50 detainees released from St. Louis jails because of virus have been rearrested, city official says*, St. Louis Post-Dispatch (May 26, 2020), https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/about-50-detainees-released-from-st-louis-jails-because-of-virus-have-been-rearrested-city/article_7c8cb6e8-d4b4-558b-b5f7-f51ab1cf426a.html.



Among other statements, Director Edwards said the following: “About 50 of the pretrial detainees released from city jails because of coronavirus concerns have been arrested again for other offenses”; “well over 300 pretrial detainees [have] been released”; “Just over the Memorial Day weekend, there were close to 20 [arrested]”; “most detainees released due to the need to reduce the spread of COVID-19 had been in jail awaiting trial on felony charges,” including “some folks accused of murder, robbery, carjacking, assault and sexual offenses.” In addition, City Spokesperson Jacob Long stated in a follow-up that “the number of detainees released due to COVID-19 concerns and then rearrested was about 58.”

Director Edwards offered no specific evidence of these claims at the hearing. By asking the City’s legislative body to make policy decisions based on the figures, he has made the truth of these claims a matter of public concern. Further, all incident reports and arrest reports are presumptively open records under Missouri law. § 610.100.2(3), RS Mo.

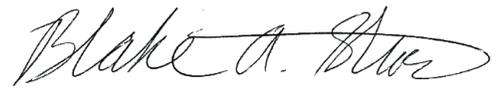
Records requested:

1. Names and cause numbers for any individual released from custody of St. Louis City jails between March 15, 2020 and May 26, 2020.
2. Records of arrest and of any subsequent detention or confinement, with the associated criminal charge, for any individual arrested and held in St. Louis City Jails between March 15, 2020 and May 26, 2020.
3. All records for individuals held in St. Louis City Jails who were charged with the following conduct, released, and re-arrested between March 15, 2020 and May 26, 2020:
 - a. Murder
 - b. Robbery
 - c. Carjacking
 - d. Assault
 - e. Sexual offenses
4. Records reflecting the annual re-arrest or recidivism rate for the City of St. Louis in 2018, 2019, and/or 2020.
5. Any communication by Mr. Edwards, City Spokesperson Jacob Long, or any other City employee regarding the re-arrest of individuals released from St. Louis City jails due to COVID-19.
6. Any reports, communication, or data not included above that Mr. Edwards relied on when making the foregoing claims in his testimony before the Board of Alderman on May 26, 2020.

Please produce these records within three business days in accordance with § 610.023.3. If access is denied to this record or any part of these records, please provide the grounds of such denial pursuant to § 610.023.3-4. Please separate any material which is not exempt from disclosure from material which you claim is exempt from disclosure, and “make the nonexempt material available for examination and copying.” § 610.024.1. If you possess the record in electronic format, please provide the record in electronic format. § 610.029.1.

I respectfully request that all fees for locating and copying the records be waived as this request will be used to advance the public interest and to enhance the knowledge of the residents of Missouri about their judicial system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Blake A. Stroe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Blake Stroe
Executive Director
ArchCity Defenders