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April 16, 2021

Merrick Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Re: The Conditions at the Oklahoma County Jail

Dear Attorney General Garland,

I write to bring to your attention the dire situation at the Oklahoma County Jail, located at 201 N Shartel Avenue in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

On July 1, 2020, Oklahoma County's Jail Trust seized control of the jail from the sheriff's office to institute positive changes and promote a culture of personal growth. However, since the transfer of power, 10 inmates have died in the custody of the Oklahoma County Jail and it has become a more dangerous and hostile environment.

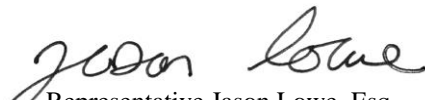
As a criminal defense attorney, I visit the jail weekly and have experienced firsthand the horrendous conditions. Inmates are subject to mold, bed bugs, and a lack of access to medical care and basic health and hygiene needs. These are civil rights violations that require the attention of the US Attorney General.

Most recently, four detention officers have been charged with assault and battery for incidents involving inmates, and a detention officer was held hostage by inmates in protest of their living conditions, which resulted in an inmate being shot and killed by Oklahoma City police officers. The jail is uninhabitable and in need of reform.

Oklahoma County's inmate population deserves better. Our detention officers deserve better. Our community deserves better. It has become obvious that due to the political strife among the jail's stakeholders that this problem will persist indefinitely until someone intercedes. Unfortunately, many of our state facilities are understaffed as well. We need federal help.

The magnitude of this crisis calls for immediate action.

Sincerely,


Representative Jason Lowe, Esq.