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January 9, 2020

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Governor Phil Bryant
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 139
Jackson, Mississippi 39205
governor@governor.state.ms.us

Pelicia E. Hall
Commissioner
Mississippi Department of Corrections
301 North Lamar Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39201
phall@mdoc.state.ms.us

Re: Conditions In Mississippi Prisons

Dear Governor Bryant and Commissioner Hall,

We write to protest the inhumane conditions in prisons operated by the Mississippi Department of Corrections with the hope of preventing the deaths of more incarcerated people. Having been in touch with numerous families affected by the violence permeating Mississippi's prisons that has resulted from Mississippi's continued failure to adequately fund its prisons, we are prepared to pursue legal action to address this intolerable situation.

In the past two weeks, five incarcerated individuals have died in the Mississippi prison system as a result of prison violence. This unthinkable spate of deaths is the culmination of years of severe understaffing and neglect at Mississippi's prisons. As Mississippi has incarcerated increasing numbers of people, it has dramatically reduced its funding of prisons. As a result, prison conditions fail to meet even the most basic human rights. Prisons lack adequate guards and are plagued by violence, with incarcerated people fearing for their lives. The understaffing results in frequent lockdowns, with men and women held in solitary-confinement-like conditions. People are forced to live in squalor, with rats that crawl over them as they sleep on the floor, having

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been denied even a mattress for a cot. The death of people held in Mississippi's prisons is a predictable—and entirely preventable—consequence of Mississippi's utter disregard for the people it has incarcerated.

These inhumane conditions are unconstitutional. The Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibits the infliction of cruel and unusual punishment and is violated when prison officials fail to protect against prison-related violence and when prison conditions fail to meet basic human needs. The conditions present a grave and immediate threat to the men and women in Mississippi's prisons, many of whom await trial and have been convicted of no crime.

Roc Nation and its philanthropic arm, Team Roc, demand that Mississippi take immediate steps to remedy this intolerable situation. When every day carries with it the possibility of yet another preventable death, the incarcerated men and women and their families deserve urgent action. As such, we request a response by the end of the day tomorrow, January 10, 2020, to our concerns and are prepared to pursue all potential avenues to obtain relief for the people living in Mississippi's prisons and their families.

We reserve all rights.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'AS' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Alex Spiro

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Ellyde R. Thompson'.

Ellyde R. Thompson

On behalf of Team Roc

cc: Shawn Carter, Chairman of Roc Nation
Mario Mims, *aka* Yo Gotti

cc: Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, Mississippi 39215
ltgov@senate.ms.gov