Template for families to use in sending letter to Presiding Judge on COVID-19 Issues

Date

Honorable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County

Street address

Re: COVID-19 Related Treatment of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (your son or daughter’s name), case no. \_\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Judge \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

My/our son/daughter, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, case no \_\_\_\_\_\_ is currently being held in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of Juvenile Hall or Camp). I/we are writing because we are concerned for his/her safety in the COVID-19 pandemic. We are concerned that the facility is not following the requirements of the Title 15 California Code of Regulations *Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities*, or the guidance on COVID-19 from the Board of State and Community Corrections. We ask you to:

1. Use your authority under Welfare and Institutions Code section 209, to investigate the treatment of our child, and notify the operator of the facility and the Board of State and Community Corrections of your findings; and based on your findings,

2. Use your authority to order the release of our child.

[Describe what you are concerned about and how you know about the problems (for example, your son or daughter told you in a phone call). Some of the things that are supposed to be happening are in the BSCC guidance (attached). If these things are not happening, you should say that in the letter. Things like no sanitation, no information about preventing the spread of COVID-19, no social distancing, use of solitary confinement, lack of programming and education, lack of alternative ways to have visits and phone calls, access to attorneys, no out of cell time or time outdoors, etc. You could describe what a day is like for your child from morning to night.

Also,you could talk about the need to release your child because of health conditions such as asthma, respiratory disease, pregnancy or other conditions your child has making them vulnerable to COVID-19 complications. Also you could talk about the emotional impact of being in the facility – are they afraid, anxious, depressed?

Also talk about why your child should be released. Begin by saying that the facility is not keeping them safe and that you are concerned for their health and well-being. Talk about whether they are in custody for a low- level violation or whether it is almost time for them to come home. Also, if they are in a commitment program or camp, you could say that they are being held to receive education and services, but those services are not being provided.]

Please let me/us know what steps you take as a result of this letter, and your findings. Also please let us know if you have notified the operator of the facility and the Board of State and Community Corrections of any problems, as required by section 209.

Thank you for your help. Please let us know if we can provide further information to assist you.

Sincerely,

Your name(s)

Address

Email

Telephone

Encls. (include the BSCC Guidance)

Cc: Juvenile Justice Commission, \_\_\_\_\_, County (you can look this up online)