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May 9, 2006

Mayor Shirley Franklin
City Hall, Suite 2400
55 Trinity Avenue, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30335

Ms. Karen C. Handel, Chair
Fulton County Board of Commissioners
141 Pryor Street, SW
Suite 10044
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Mayor Franklin and Chairperson Handel:

On Wednesday of last week (May 3, 2005), I received a telephone call directly from Senator Isakson.

Senator Isakson said that he, Senator Chambliss and the other members of the congressional delegation, whose districts include portions of Atlanta and Fulton County, had received the resolutions that were unanimously adopted by the Fulton County Commission on April 19, 2006, and by the Atlanta City Council on Monday May 1, 2006, but that they were reluctant to become involved *without a direct request from the two of you.*

The resolutions of the City Council and the County Commission were adopted in direct response to the statement by Mayor Franklin in her letter to Chairperson Handel dated March 23, 2006, in which Mayor Franklin said that the City of Atlanta was not in a position to assist the County in resolving the overcrowding problems at the Fulton County Jail which has reached crisis proportions by making 500 beds in the Atlanta Detention Center available to the County because "we [the City] have obligated 350 beds to the United States Marshal Service (USMS) and 150 to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE). On any given day, they may use less than that, but we have to be in a position to provide 500 beds on demand."

Mayor Franklin went on in the same letter, however, to assure Chairman Handel that *"We [the City] have made it clear that should the Federal agencies choose to relinquish their beds, the County would be welcome to them. The Federal agencies, however, have expressed no willingness to do this to date. I can assure you that the City has no interest in holding beds in abeyance; we have every economic and operational incentive to ensure that the Detention Center is fully utilized. If there were more beds available, I can assure you that we would make them available to the County. They simply do not exist."*

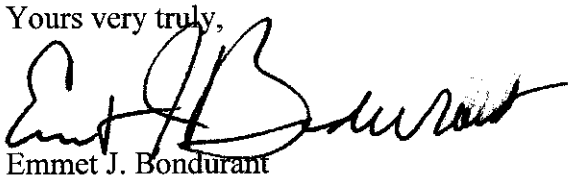
Based on the statements in this letter, the both the Fulton County Commission and the Atlanta City Council unanimously adopted resolutions asking Senators and Isakson and Chambliss, and Representatives John Lewis, Tom Price and David Scott, whose districts include portions of the City of Atlanta or Fulton County, to request that the Marshal Service agree to a mutual termination of its contract with the City of Atlanta for the housing of federal prisoners (including immigration law violators) at the Atlanta Detention Center. This would permit the City to make those 500 beds available to Fulton County to relieve the overcrowded conditions at the Fulton County Jail, which, in turn, have contributed to many of the security and court congestion problems at the Fulton County Courthouse.

Senator Isakson said that he and Senator Chambliss were reluctant to become involved in the relationship between the City of Atlanta and the Marshal Service based solely on the resolutions of the Fulton County Commission and the Atlanta City Council without a direct request from the two of you as the chief executives of the two governments. Senator Isakson suggested that the best way to proceed would be for the two of you to meet personally with him and Senator Chambliss, and Representatives Lewis, Price and Scott.

The crisis at the Fulton County Jail adversely affects the entire community and urgently requires an immediate solution. The only immediate solution on the horizon that could be implemented without costing citizens and taxpayers of Atlanta and Fulton County hundreds of millions of dollars, and requiring five or more years to complete, is for the City and County to cooperate in relieving the overcrowding at the Fulton County Jail by jointly using and operating the Atlanta Detention Center and the closed Atlanta Municipal Court Building.

We, therefore, urge each of you personally to call Senators Isakson and Chambliss and Representatives Lewis, Price and Scott as soon as possible to arrange a meeting with the entire congressional delegation as Senator Isakson has suggested.

Yours very truly,



Emmet J. Bondurant
as Chairman and on behalf of the
Fulton County Justice Commission

Rev. Joe Beasley, Antioch Baptist Church, and
S.E. Director, Rainbow Push Coalition

Linda Coker, Chief Deputy Sheriff, Cobb County

Mr. Clark Cunningham, Georgia State University
Law School

Ray Persons, Esq., Partner, King & Spalding

Mark Trigg, Esq., Partner, Greenberg Traurig

Dr. Keith Wood, Emory University

EJB:cam

cc: Senator Johnny Isakson
Senator Saxby Chambliss
Representative John Lewis
Representative Tom Price
Representative David Scott
Members of the Fulton County Commission
Members of the Atlanta City Council
Mr. Tom Andrews
Ms. Suzanne Alliegro