

'We Are Their Voices' movement sets Crescent City events for Friday, Aug. 21

August 20, 2020



A statewide effort to draw attention to concerns that loved ones have for those incarcerated in state prisons is part of a movement identified as "We Are Their Voices."

Spokesperson Sylvia Guzman said "We Are Their Voices" will stage three activities locally this Friday, Aug. 21. Similar activities have been held in communities where state prisons are located elsewhere in California.

Among the concerns those in the movement have expressed is the risk incarcerated people face due to COVID-19. Although there have been no reported cases of the virus among inmates at Pelican Bay State Prison, there have been major outbreaks at a number of other prisons.

Data available this morning from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation showed more than 9,700 total confirmed inmate cases statewide and 55 deaths. CDCR data showed more than 3,700 confirmed cases among staff and 10 related staff deaths have been reported.

Part of the state's response to the virus — in part due to pressure from advocates for the incarcerated and the courts — has been to release inmates. The statewide prison population has been reduced by more than 18,000 since March 11. Those involved in "We Are Their Voices" would like to see more releases.

Events scheduled locally Friday include a rally at Beachfront Park at 10 a.m. followed by a march to City Hall at 10:30 with speeches to follow. At 12:45 a protest in front of PBSP is planned with a group photo and balloon ceremony wrapping up the day's events there at 3 p.m.

A published agenda for the day's events states that the CHP gave the OK to park on Lake Earl Drive as long as vehicles are properly parked. Guzman said the movement has been in contact with local law enforcement.

Lt. Kenny Price of PBSP said the CHP has advised that there is no parking in the bike lane or turn lanes.

"As long as the protesters stay in the public right of way, we are good with the protest," he said. "Also they (protesters) are not allowed to come on grounds." He said the CHP will not intervene as long as the road doesn't become a safety issue.