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The Richmond Commonwealth's Attorney's Office would never seek to disenfranchise the disadvantaged or disheartened. Our Office believes that every citizen who is charged with a crime deserves to have an attorney represent his or her interest in court, unless the citizen chooses to waive that right.

The sole purpose of yesterday's announcement that the Office would waive jail in those cases involving only peaceful violation of the curfew law was to relieve defendants of the fear of incarceration. It was never to prevent a defendant from obtaining the services of either privately retained counsel or a court appointed attorney. I applaud those members of the Richmond criminal defense bar who have offered their services, at little or no cost, to represent people charged with violating the curfew. As always, our Office will work with the defense bar and the court to ensure that defendants who wish to be represented by either court appointed or private counsel have the opportunity to exercise that right.

The bottom line is that if your only offense was a peaceful curfew violation, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office will not seek any sanction involving active or suspended jail time. We will continue our due diligence to obtain body worn camera video footage and review all relevant evidence prior to an individualized decision regarding each case.

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