

Gov. Abbott modifies COVID-19 executive orders to eliminate confinement as punishment

AUSTIN, Texas – Texas Governor Greg Abbott has modified his executive orders related to COVID-19 to eliminate confinement as a punishment for violating the orders.

The governor says that the modifications are being applied retroactively and in his announcement highlighted particular cases like Shelley Luther's, the Dallas salon owner who was sentenced to jail time after refusing to apologize for opening her business despite countywide restrictions.

"Throwing Texans in jail who have had their businesses shut down through no fault of their own is nonsensical, and I will not allow it to happen," says Governor Abbott. "That is why I am modifying my executive orders to ensure confinement is not a punishment for violating an order. This order is retroactive to April 2nd, supersedes local orders and if correctly applied should free Shelley Luther."

"It may also ensure that other Texans like Ana Isabel Castro-Garcia and Brenda Stephanie Mata who were arrested in Laredo, should not be subject to confinement. As some county judges advocate for releasing hardened criminals from jail to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it is absurd to have these business owners take their place," Gov. Abbott says.

Later in the day after the governor's announcement, the Supreme Court of Texas issued an order for the release of Luther.

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