



PASS THE JAIL AND PRISON CONSTRUCTION MORATORIUM

PLEASE CO-SPONSOR THE JAIL AND PRISON CONSTRUCTION MORATORIUM (S1979/H1795) AND WORK TO PASS IT IMMEDIATELY. Co-sponsor Primary Caretakers Diversion (S1049) & Parole Review for Aging Incarcerated People (S1547/H2397) - policies that will help eliminate the need for any women's prison in Massachusetts.

PURPOSE OF THE PRISON MORATORIUM

The Prison Moratorium will create a 5 year pause on major jail and prison construction and expansion so we can focus on further reducing the number of people in prison, implementing alternatives, and investing in communities. The bill will not prevent essential repairs.

BACKGROUND

MA is planning to build a \$50 million women's prison. Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women oppose this project, and want elected officials to use their power to release women and resource communities rather than build jails and prisons. This includes decriminalization of drugs and sex work, diversion, community-based sentencing, parole, expanding medical parole, establishing elder parole, and clemency.

MA has the lowest rate of incarceration in the United States. From 2014-2019, the incarcerated population in MA decreased by more than 20%. During that same time, spending on jails and prisons increased by 18%. **It currently costs \$235,000 per year to incarcerate one woman in Framingham. We invest \$1.7 billion of public resources every year in a system that only causes further harm.** Now is the moment to create what different looks like and make MA a model for the rest of the country by passing the Prison Moratorium! Then we can maximize pathways to release; decriminalize drugs and sex work; and invest in what communities need to thrive: housing, healing, treatment, transportation, education, childcare, and economic development.

WOMEN IN FRAMINGHAM

200 women are incarcerated at Framingham. About 20% are pre-trial detainees from Middlesex County, many held on bail they can't afford. Incarcerated women are overwhelmingly survivors of violence and trauma. The vast majority of women in MCI-Framingham are mothers separated from their children. There are 7 women in their 70s and 10 women in their 60s in Framingham. Women are suffering from a range of significant illnesses and receiving inadequate healthcare from Wellpath. Women express a need for mental health care and treatment that cannot happen inside prison. Incarcerated women have hopes, plans, and so much to give. Women deserve better than prison.



BUILDING UP PEOPLE NOT PRISONS

THE FALSE PROMISE OF PRISON CONSTRUCTION

It is possible to close MCI-Framingham without rebuilding or replacing it, if we focus on pathways to release, alternatives to incarceration, and reinvesting in communities. Formerly incarcerated women are clear: there is no such thing as a safe or trauma-informed prison. DOC was cited by the Department of Justice for failure to provide adequate mental healthcare and conditions that violate the 8th amendment of the Constitution. DOC has failed to implement many changes required by the Criminal Justice Reform Act of 2018. A 2022 Prisoners' Legal Services report documents incarcerated women's experiences of rampant sexual abuse, violence, and dehumanization. A different building does not change the culture of DOC. A prime example of that is Souza-Baronowski. When it was newly built, Souza was touted as state of the art, yet is now the site of some of the worst abuses by DOC.

Families for Justice as Healing and The National Council conducted years of participatory research with formerly incarcerated women about what they needed and dreamed about for their families and communities. Not a single woman said a new prison. The question in MA is not "do we want an old women's prison or a new women's prison" the question is "***what else is possible beyond prison?***"

REIMAGINING COMMUNITIES NOT PRISONS

Healthy thriving people create healthy thriving communities. Families for Justice as Healing and The National Council lead organizing called Reimagining Communities to create what different looks like including a hydroponic farm in Roxbury for residents to grow fresh food, a community pantry, a Guaranteed Basic Income project for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women, a Guaranteed Basic Housing program, transformative justice work, community-led crisis response, Participatory Defense, and implementing Participatory Budgeting in Boston. This community-led infrastructure allows healing to happen and helps stop the flow of people into incarceration.

Formerly incarcerated people lead projects all across the Commonwealth to meet people's needs, create healing and accountability, interrupt cycles of violence, and address the economic devastation caused by incarceration. Directly impacted people are implementing fresh ideas and approaches. MA needs to invest in these solutions - not more incarceration.