



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

April 5th, 2022

Governor Charles D. Baker
Office of the Governor
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Secretary Terrence Reidy
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
1 Ashburton Place
Suite 2133
Boston, MA 02108

Commissioner Carol Mici
Massachusetts Department of Correction
50 Maple Street
Milford, MA 01757

RE: Criminal Justice Reform Caucus calls for prison closures

Dear Governor Baker, Secretary Reidy and Commissioner Mici:

As members of the Criminal Justice Reform Caucus, we want to express our strong support for the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) and Department of Correction (DOC) to close certain state prisons, both women's and men's correctional facilities, on account of the Commonwealth's declining prison population.

In Massachusetts, the prison population has declined from [27,510 in 2011](#), [19,000 in 2017](#), to [7,503 incarcerated individuals in 2021](#). As of December 27, 2021, the Massachusetts Department of Corrections reports [6,255 incarcerated individuals under its jurisdiction](#).

Because of the actions that the Baker-Polito Administration, Legislature, District Attorneys, and advocates have taken to reduce the number of people who interact with the criminal legal system, and on account of the real dangers that the COVID-19 pandemic poses to our incarcerated population, we believe that now is the time to reduce state spending on incarceration, improve the operation of our state prisons, and increase justice investments. We believe that this will improve public safety both within our state prisons and for the entire Commonwealth.

Undoubtedly, mass incarceration is an expensive endeavor. The annual cost of incarcerating a prisoner in Massachusetts is \$122,176 per person. Many studies have highlighted how savings from prison closures could instead be diverted to invest in training, prevention, education, and re-entry services, which are all proven to decrease overall incarceration and recidivism rates. More importantly, investing in our communities by fortifying our social safety nets trends towards the sort of humane and ethical approach to harm reduction that is long overdue, as opposed to the punitive model that we have accepted for most of history.

We implore you to close state correctional facilities in Massachusetts. Thank you for your strong consideration. Please feel free to be in touch with Criminal Justice Caucus Co-chairs, Senator Jamie Eldridge or Rep. Mary Keefe, with any questions.

Sincerely,

State Senator Jamie Eldridge, *Middlesex and Worcester District*
Senate Co-chair, Criminal Justice Reform Caucus

State Representative Mary S. Keefe, *15th Worcester District*
House Co-chair, Criminal Justice Reform Caucus

State Senator Jo Comerford, *Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester District*

State Senator Mikel Barrett, *3rd Middlesex District*

State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, *2nd Suffolk District*

State Senator Adam Gomez, *Hampden District*

State Senator Pat Jehlen, *Second Middlesex District*

State Senator Becca Rausch, *Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex District*

State Senator Jason Lewis, *Fifth Middlesex*

State Senator Sal DiDomenico, *Middlesex and Suffolk*

State Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley, *12th Suffolk District*

State Representative Liz Miranda, *5th Suffolk District*

State Representative Jack Lewis, *7th Middlesex District*

State Representative Carmine Gentile, *13th Middlesex District*

State Representative Vanna Howard, *17th Middlesex District*

State Representative Danillo Sena, *37th Middlesex District*

State Representative Mike Connolly, *26th Middlesex*

State Representative Kay Khan, *11th Middlesex*

State Representative Erika Uyterhoeven, *27th Middlesex District*

Cc:

Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito House Speaker Ronald Mariano

Senate President Karen E. Spilka

EOPSS Undersecretary for Criminal Justice Andrew Peck

Department of Corrections Commissioner Carol Mici

Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association President Peter J. Koutoujian