



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Court

March 9, 2023

Maura Healey, Governor
State House, Room 280
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

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

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

RE: Criminal Justice Reform Caucus Requests for MCI-Framingham

Dear Governor Healey, Secretary Reidy and Commissioner Mici,

As the respective sponsors of the Prison Moratorium legislation and co-chairs of the Criminal Justice Reform Caucus, we write to thank you for the meeting on Tuesday, February 21 in the Governor's office with Alicia Rebello-Pradas, Deputy Chief of Staff for Legislative Affairs and Department of Correction (DOC)'s Commissioner Carol Mici. We greatly appreciated discussing actions to ensure that no new prisons or jails are built in the Commonwealth, future plans for the MCI-Framingham prison campus, as well as the incarceration of women in Massachusetts. We wish to highlight our views on these subjects, respectfully requesting the following:

- 1. We request that Governor Healey issue an Executive Order, or comparable stand-alone statement, that there will be no new prisons built in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.**

Incarceration levels continue to drop in state and county correctional facilities. The passage of comprehensive criminal justice reform, combined with deeper understanding of the efficacy of alternatives to incarceration and after incarceration support services, lead us to believe that we must focus on decarceration and downsizing, neither of which relies on a new facility.

- 2. We request that Governor Healey permanently close MCI-Framingham prison, and move women to lower security correctional facilities. We also request that the Governor release as many women as possible through pardons, commutations, home confinement, or medical parole.**

As you know, the concerning conditions inside MCI-Framingham have been well-documented by government agencies, incarcerated women at MCI-Framingham, prison reform advocates, visiting attorneys, and legislators. As legislators, we understand that the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) and DOC have performed studies and hired private firms to determine the costs of rehabilitating various buildings at the MCI-Framingham prison campus, including MCI-Framingham state prison and the South Middlesex Correctional Center (SMCC). Given that there are currently approximately 130 sentenced women at MCI-Framingham, we believe it would not be a good use of taxpayer dollars to spend funds improving the MCI-Framingham prison. We believe the alternatives listed above, and justice reinvestment in re-entry services, education and programming, and social investment in the communities are much better investments for those incarcerated and for the general public.

- 3. We request that EOPSS, DOC, and any state agency involved in the prison system, to be completely transparent about options being considered for rehabbing and improving any state or county correctional facility.**

It is essential to develop a plan for state investments in these facilities that ensures that incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people have a decision-influencing seat at the table, and that the plan be provided in a public-facing document, that guides the actions by all three government branches over the next 10 years.

The most recent grassroots movement to end mass incarceration began in 2014. It took four years to pass the Criminal Justice Reform Act of 2018, in partnership with criminal justice reform advocates, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people, reform-minded legislators, and the Baker-Polito administration. We express our deep appreciation to Governor Healey, during her service as Attorney General as she has long been a strong advocate for reform. Over the past four years, committed efforts have been made by state government – in a partnership between the Executive Branch and the Legislature – to change the culture in our state prisons, invest in

re-entry programs outside of prisons, and begin to expand programming, education, and mental health support behind the walls. We believe that such efforts can only begin to become comprehensive if there is a clear plan by the Healey-Driscoll administration on the use and rehabilitation of Massachusetts correctional facilities.

Thank you again for the meeting on Tuesday, February 21. We look forward to strengthening our partnership with this exciting new administration.

Sincerely,



Senator James B. Eldridge, Co-chair
Criminal Justice Reform Caucus
Middlesex and Worcester District



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



Senator Jo Comerford
Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester District



Representative Chynah Tyler
7th Suffolk District