



JAIL & PRISON CONSTRUCTION MORATORIUM BILL SD1774/HD3824

BACKGROUND

Massachusetts has one of the lowest rates of incarceration in the country, yet we spend more on jails and prisons than most other states. While the incarcerated population in MA **decreased** 21% from 2011-19, spending on incarceration has **increased** 25%. MA spends about \$1.4 billion annually operating jails and prisons **plus** plans to spend an additional \$520 million of capital funds on major jail/prison construction projects over the next 10 years in addition to regular maintenance.

One of those projects is a \$50+ million new women's prison that will incarcerate generations of family members in MA.

WHAT THE BILL WILL DO

Formerly incarcerated women at Families for Justice as Healing and the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls wrote this landmark bill to create a 5 year pause button on jail and prison design and construction. The Moratorium bill will:

- ➔ **Give the Commonwealth a chance to shift spending priorities especially as we recover from COVID**
- ➔ **Give communities the opportunity to create and sustain solutions that address the root causes of incarceration**
- ➔ **Allow the state to fully implement criminal justice reforms**
- ➔ **Pause the new women's prison process to implement alternatives**

WHAT THE BILL WILL NOT DO

Conditions inside many MA prisons and jails are toxic and inhumane. **The bill will not stop the state from routine maintenance or making essential repairs.** It will pause excessive spending on major renovations and construction as MA continues the trend of reducing incarceration. During the Moratorium we can focus on diversion, pre-trial release, community-based sentencing, clemency, parole, medical parole. **Let's invest in real alternatives and solutions led by directly affected people!**