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STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

MEMORANDUM

To: Sen Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair
Rep. Melanie Sachs, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

From: Sen. Pinny Beebe-Center, Senate Chair PBC
Rep. Suzanne Salisbury, House Chair SS
Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Date: March 15, 2023

Re: Supplemental Report Back Memo: Criminal Justice and Public Safety committee report back with recommendations to Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee on LD 258, An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025

On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety ("CJPS"), we are pleased to convey to the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs ("AFA") the additional recommendations of CJPS on items within its jurisdiction in the Governor's proposed biennial budget for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 (the "Budget").

CJPS conducted a work session on Wednesday, March 15, 2023 to hear more testimony and gather additional information from the Maine Department of Corrections ("MDOC"). Two MDOC programs were discussed at this work session: (1) juvenile community corrections, the baseline budget of which is found on page 30 of the report back document; and (2) Long Creek Youth Development Center, the baseline budget of which is found on page 33 of the report back document.

Based on the discussion during this work session, CJPS is providing the following additional recommendations on the Budget.

A. Reallocation of Funding from Long Creek Youth Development Center Budget to Community Based Services and Step-Down Programming

Of the 12 members of the committee voting, 5 supported a recommendation that $2,600,000 of the increase in the Budget from previous years for Long Creek Youth Development Center be used for community services and step-down programming. The committee gave examples, including helping troubled youth in Skowhegan, Rockland and Fairfield.

A significant portion of the work session was devoted to discussing alternatives to the Long Creek Youth Development Center, including community-based services and step-down programs. According to the MDOC, these alternatives are intended to provide juveniles a way to avoid detention in Long Creek, a way to transition from detention or confinement in Long Creek back into the community, and a way to avoid the juvenile justice system all together.

B. Express Support for Current Focus on Community Based Systems

Of the 11 members voting, 5 members voted to express their support in this memo at the MDOC's ability when handing its budget to reallocate funds for unfilled staffing positions into other areas focused on community-based systems. Those members recommend AFA allow MDOC to continue this practice and focus on reallocating funding, whenever possible, from Long Creek Youth Development Center to community-based programs run by MDOC.

Another significant portion of the discussion with MDOC at the Budget work session revolved around MDOC's ability to transfer unused personal services funding to other community-based correctional systems overseen by MDOC. MDOC indicated to CJPS that when staffing positions at Long Creek Youth Development Center go unfilled, the money allocated for that purpose is permitted to be reinvested in other facilities, including those that provide community-based services—a practice that MDOC regularly engages in. MDOC also stated that this practice is somewhat rare and that it allows flexibility for MDOC funding.

C. Statement Commending the Work of the Maine Department of Corrections

CJPS engaged in hours of discussion and took a significant amount of testimony from MDOC at several Budget work sessions. MDOC devoted a significant amount of time and was willing and able to answer any question posed by CJPS, provide information requested, and returned to the committee room on multiple occasions. Because of this, CJPS wishes to commend and express its appreciation to MDOC for their work with CJPS, and more generally for providing its services to the State of Maine.

cc: Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Maureen Dawson - Principal Analyst, OFPR
Joseph Greene – Legislative Analyst, OPLA
Suzanne Voynik - Analyst, OFPR
Justin Purvis – Secretary/clerk, OFPR
Kirsten Figueroa – Commissioner, Department of Administrative and Financial Services
Randall Liberty – Commissioner, Department of Corrections