



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
111 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA MAINE
04333-0111

RANDALL A. LIBERTY
COMMISSIONER

**Testimony of
Randall A. Liberty, Commissioner
Department of Corrections**

In Support of

LD 206 An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 .

January 24, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. I am Randall Liberty, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Corrections.

DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

The Maine Department of Corrections is responsible for the direction and general administrative supervision, guidance and planning of adult and juvenile correctional facilities, community corrections, and related programs within the State of Maine. Currently, there are 1,663 adult residents inside an MDOC facility, 94 adult residents living in the community as part of the early release Supervised Community Confinement Program, 5,428 adults involved with probation, 18 juveniles committed and detained, and lastly, there are 63 youth on probation.

A few years ago, the MDOC embarked on a journey to find a better way of doing corrections. We developed the Maine Model of Corrections, grounded in the foundational principle of humanization. By treating people well, with respect and decency, we see lasting behavioral changes, safer communities, and witness individuals reinvesting in healthy lives with lower risk of re-offense. The efforts to put into motion this framework can be seen every day, by staff, residents, and clients who model for one another open communication, non-adversarial interactions, inclusion, and promotion of the safety and well-being of all. Living spaces have been transformed, data practices have been overhauled for better decision making, stigmatizing language has been replaced with person-first language, staff trainings and recruitment are improved for more diverse hiring, and long held policies and practices have been revised to recognize common humanity.

This is what corrections should look like in 2023 and with your help, the Maine Model of Corrections will continue to uphold the values of this State.

I look forward to talking more about the department, our priorities, and our shared work throughout this session.

Now to the specifics of the Department's requests in the supplemental.

The Maine Department of Corrections has requested appropriations for the following:

- On page A-8 the Department is requesting two supplemental appropriations in the Adult Community Corrections program (0124).

The first initiative is a request for **\$78,000** for increased costs for leasing probation office space and costs associated with the relocation a adult probation office.

The primary role of the Adult Community Corrections division is to supervise, and case manage post-conviction clients who are on probation, or who are still under MDOC's supervision but residing in the community as part of the Supervised Community Confinement Program.

The department serves more than 5,400 clients through adult probation services. Clients meet with their probation officer at regional offices and engage in case planning, which outlines targeted treatment and program interventions to reduce criminal behavioral and promote pro-social behaviors.

The requested \$78,000 will ensure we are able to keep funded contracts for the valuable work happening inside probation offices. Work that most certainly reduces the likelihood of reincarceration in state prisons or county jails.

The Bureau of General Services negotiates contracts for the 23 offices serving adult and juvenile clients. They do their best to keep costs down, but increases can be inevitable at times.

In addition to general increases, it can be tricky to find suitable locations for probation offices. Many communities and many landlords are unwilling to house a probation office or have concerns with probation clients in the community. We have the added challenge of finding office space that is large enough for our needs. Typically, we need about 6,000 sq. ft, which runs close to \$18.00 a sq. foot.

- Also on page A-8, the second initiative is a request for **\$16,000** for increased costs associated with cleaning contracts for adult community correction offices. The Division of Purchases goes out to bid for cleaning contracts and accepts the lowest bid, however, there have been an increase in cleaning protocols since COVID which have resulted in higher costs.
- The next initiative addresses increased fuel costs across four programs within the Department. The request if for **\$1.37 million** and will support the **Bolduc Correctional Facility (Z155)**, **Downeast Correctional Facility (0542)**, **Mountain View Correctional Facility (0857)**, and the **Maine State Prison (0144)**.
The funding request addresses the increased fuel costs based on the actual usage at each of these facilities, averaged over the prior three years, multiplied by the per gallon costs of \$3.92 dollars. The Statewide fuel contact is negotiated by the Division of Purchases.

This ends my testimony on the MDOC's supplemental funding requests. As you know, we operate the Department in an efficient manner looking internally for all possible cost-savings to offset additional costs. The supplemental funding requests proposed here today are requested out of necessity for the Department and its on-going operations. We appreciate the support you offer of the work we do.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Randall A. Liberty