

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



February 3, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

My name is Jan Collins, I am Assistant Director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC) an organization committed to ethical, positive, and humane changes in Maine's prison system.

I am here in opposition to **LD 210 An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations**. In particular, MPAC is opposed to the cuts made to essential services that serve the working people of Maine, the continued subsidy of large corporations, and the lack of fairness in revenue streams.

Public Safety is a concern for all of us. It is of particular importance to MPAC, because when there is less crime, there are fewer people incarcerated. That serves all of us.

There is plenty of research regarding the protective factors that keep people out of prison, education, job training, health care, and housing. These are the same factors that make families, communities and our state a good place to work and live and that are being cut in this budget.

The proposed cuts to Head Start, child care, food assistance, medical care, direct care workers, and state workers do not save money in the long run. They have long term and expensive consequences for the future. These cuts are poor policy.

We have not recovered from the 2011 income tax cuts that primarily benefited the wealthy. We have lost hundreds of millions of dollars per year since then. That is where this shortfall comes from – not federal funds or overspending.

To rectify the underfunding and shift the tax burden from working Mainers to those who benefit most from our economy, there are several steps we can take:

1. End ineffective subsidies for wealthy corporations.

2. Add a high income tax bracket. Currently working families who make just over \$63,000 annually pay the same tax as someone who makes a million dollars. Since high income earners use much more of Maine's resources shouldn't they also shoulder more of the tax burden?
3. Raise the real estate transfer tax on higher priced homes. The additional funds can be used to bridge the housing gap, so working Mainers can afford to buy homes.

If the roof of your house needs new shingles, you can save money by putting it off for another year or maybe doing half of it this year and putting off the rest for later. But, you risk getting water damage which will be even more expensive to repair. That is what we are doing with this budget. We are underfunding essential programs. There will be a price to pay for that neglect.

I urge the committee to consider alternative funding sources and keep essential programs fully funded.

Thanks for your consideration,

Jan

Jan M. Collins

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