

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



March 26, 2025

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier and distinguished members of the Taxation Committee:

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 support of both LD 1047 An Act to Impose an Additional Tax on Certain Unearned Income and LD 1089 An Act to Permanently Fund 55 Percent of the State's Share of Education by Establishing a Tax on Incomes of More than \$1,000,000.

While others have eloquently argued the issues of equity in taxation and the need for adequate funding, I would like to talk about the consequences of not raising enough to adequately fund the responsibilities of government.

There are several factors that protect people from incarceration.

The higher a person's income the less likely they are to be incarcerated.¹

The higher one's education the less likely you are to be incarcerated. "More than half of people who serve time in prison hold only a high school diploma or GED, and a quarter hold no credential at all."²

People who have job skills are less likely to be incarcerated, because people who are employed are less likely to commit crimes.

"Five investigations studied changes in reincarceration rates and crime rates post-ACA and suggest Medicaid expansion is associated with decreased crime rates and

reincarceration. For example, one study suggested that [Medicaid expansion was associated](#) with decreased rates of burglary and robbery, motor vehicle theft, and violent crime. Another found the rates of individual returns to prison within one and two years of release were [significantly lower in expansion states](#) versus nonexpansion states.”³

We incarcerate the poor and the sick at incredible costs to taxpayers with the cost of incarcerating someone at Maine state prison for one year ranging from \$87,000 to \$117,000 per person. Imagine if we spent that kind of money on education.

Investments in education, workforce development, and health care are preventative. They are wise investments of taxpayer dollars. In the last, 10 years we have left hundreds of millions of dollars in essential public investments languishing on the appropriations table for lack of funding. The resulting devastation in peoples lives can be seen in the ever increasing and always funded corrections budget.

When we invest in education, healthcare, and workforce development we invest in the prosperity of individuals, communities and our state as a whole.

Thank-you for your support of both these bills that will increase our investment in the people of Maine. Budgets are moral documents.

With appreciation,

Jan

¹Rabuy, B., Kopf, D. *Prisons of Poverty: Uncovering the pre-incarceration incomes of the imprisoned*. Prison Policy Institute. July 2015. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/income.html>.

²Coulotte, Lucius. *Getting Back on Course: Educational exclusion and attainment among formerly incarcerated people*. Prison Policy Institute. October 2018. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/education.html>.

³Barsky, B., Joline, J., Rosenthal, M. *Expanding Health Insurance for Formerly Incarcerated People. Improving Health Care Quality*. The Commonwealth Fund. January 29, 2025. <https://>

www.commonwealthfund.org/blog/2025/expanding-health-insurance-formerly-incarcerated-people#:~:text=Several%20studies%20found%20that%20implementation,of%20incarceration%20is%20comparatively%20sparse.