



NATIONAL CORRECTIONAL EMPLOYEES UNION

30 North King Street Northampton, MA 01060



April 28, 2025

Joint Standing Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee
100 State House Station, Rm. 436
Augusta, ME 04333
By email to CJPS@legislature.maine.gov

**RE: LD852 –AN ACT TO REDUCE THE PROPERTY TAX BURDEN BY ADEQUATELY FUNDING COUNTY
JAIL OPERATIONS**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Distinguished Legislative Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee;

My name is William Doyle. Currently I serve in the role of Executive Director for the National Correctional Employees Unions (NCEU). The National Correctional Employees Union (NCEU) represents nine (9) County Correctional Units in the State of Maine comprising of approx. four hundred (400) members from York to Aroostook County. We have been advocating for correctional officer salaries and benefits since 2010 in the State of Maine.

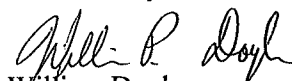
The NCEU wholeheartedly supports this legislation and increasing the County Jail Operations Fund. The County jail system has been handcuffed ever since the jail consolidation efforts of 2008. Our organization believes the increase in funding will help substantially with the recruitment and retention of correctional officers at the County level. If the NCEU understands the subsection 2-A correctly the added compensation to cover 90% of costs associated with standards compliance will reduce the amount needed from the County budgets. The rationale to cover a majority of costs from the State Budget and reduce the County burden ensures that compliance standards deemed mandatory by the State will be followed. Standards are important for the proper functioning of any correctional facility and help keep staff safe while performing their work. However, I would be remiss in my duties if we didn't share our concern over the staffing shortages in the corrections profession overall.

With the abundance of employment options paying similarly, the evolving Maine Criminal Justice Academy Standards, and general lack of stable scheduling it's becoming increasingly more difficult to attract and retain correctional personnel. While LD852 will increase the County Jail Operations Fund and provide funding for standards, the NCEU asks if the legislature is considering the increases in goods and services. If the Annual Fund Allocation increase is absorbed by increases in fuel, food, and ancillary goods and services for the jail, there will be little remaining for salaries and benefits. Regardless of linear or direct supervision, the correctional personnel are imperative toward the Care, Custody, and Control of inmates. When you look at other professionals in the same departments or offices, the communications and patrol bargaining units are not barred by the funding cap of the jails. Cumberland County currently has approx. 70 vacancies and York County has approx. 28 vacancies for corrections officers. Why focus on those counties you may be asking yourself, our answer is because southern Maine has a very competitive market for wages, benefits, and opportunities.

Due to the governor's continuous veto and the legislature's inability to override of binding arbitration legislation in the last two sessions, Correctional Professionals are at a severe disadvantage when it comes to collective bargaining.

In closing, the NCEU would like to reiterate our support for LD852 (similarly LD719) and urge the committee and full legislature pass this important piece of legislation. Thank you very much for your time and I'm happy to field any questions.

In Solidarity,


William Doyle
Executive Director

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