

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



February 24, 2021

Greetings Senator Rafferty, Representative Sylvester, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Labor and Housing.

My name is Jan Collins, I am assistant director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition and a retired high school science teacher. I am here to support **LD 319 An Act To Promote Socially Responsible Investing by the Maine Public Employees Retirement System**(of which I am a beneficiary) **by Prohibiting Investment in the Fossil Fuel Industry or for Profit Prisons.**

I am a science teacher and understand the consequences of inaction regarding carbon dioxide emissions. I would like to think that the retirement fund that invests my hard earned money would have not only my best interests, but those of my students and community in mind as well. Divesting in the fossil fuel industry places our children and communities first.

I am also assistant director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition(MPAC). We support Maine's incarcerated citizens, their families, and friends, in their struggle with Maine's criminal justice system. Our purpose is to reduce Maine's use of incarceration by creating a criminal justice system that is ethical, humane, and restorative in nature.

Private prisons do none of these things.

“Private prisons and private prison service companies dominate the correctional-services market, many with troubling records of price gouging some of the poorest families and violating the human rights of prisoners. But the problem doesn’t end there. These companies are often controlled by private-equity firms, which through financial alchemy transform the prison-industrial complex into lavish returns for pensions, endowments, and charitable foundations. And, as successive administrations have ramped up immigration enforcement, they’ve also squeezed money out of immigrant detention.

To many companies, the roughly \$80 billion that the United States spends on corrections each year is not a national embarrassment but a gold mine.”¹

Corizon one of the largest of private prison companies has more than 1000 lawsuits pending against it for its mistreatment of prisoners and cost cutting practices

Just as slavery profited from treating some members of our society as subhuman so do many private contractors in our prisons and jails.

I urge your support **LD 319 An Act To Promote Socially Responsible Investing by the Maine Public Employees Retirement System by Prohibiting Investment in the Fossil Fuel Industry or**

for Profit Prisons with one exception. Please amend the bill to include the 130 companies who provide private prison services from health care to food service and everything in between, all of which make a profit on the misery of others.

Thank-you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jan M. Collins
Wilton, Maine

Quote from <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/prison-privatization-private-equity-hig/>

Jan Collins
Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition

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