

The Honorable, William Brownsberger,
Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee
State House, Rm 504
Boston, MA 02133-1053

RE: your visit to the Norfolk Lifers' Group
September 20, 2016

Dear Senator Brownsberger,

Thank you for coming to the Lifer's Group meeting last evening. There was surely much left unsaid. We will look forward to meeting again, hopefully in the Spring.

Early in the second hour the DOC budget was mentioned specifically indicating 71% was spent on staffing and less than 2% on programs for prisoners. I didn't have an opportunity to express my views on the topic but I would like to comment here:

1. The DOC administrative staff in Milford and across the state is unreasonably "top heavy" with many salaries into six figures. Years ago the number of administrators and support staff was around 1,500 but I'm reasonable sure it has mushroomed. The number of deputy commissioners, associate commissioners, deputy directors, etc., etc. has become unreasonable and very expensive - not to mention the practice of bringing back those who have retired to exacerbate "the gaff," laughably as consultants. This area would be a good place to start saving money with cuts in staffing.

2. At MCIN alone there are so many Captains that they are nearly bumping into one another. Lieutenants abound and we are awash in sergeants. These higher positions most surely demand higher pay and expense. Inquiring minds surely like to know why are they all needed? Their overwhelming presence surely is a drain on the budget with little return on the expense.

3. Presumptive Parole would loosen the back log of prisoners languishing for unreasonably long sentences. And if in addition, older (aged) stable and cooperative inmates were **removed from DOC custody** (and 39.6% of MCI Norfolk's population is over 50 years old) and remanded into the custody of the Department of Health & Human Services - much space would be made available (created) for the care and custody of those who actually need and may benefit from closer supervision and appropriate programming outside of segregation.

4. There are simply too many (over classified) prisoners that really do not need imprisonment for the public's safety - especially older inmates who have done twenty (20) years or more. Removing aged inmates from the custody of the Department of Public Safety (and DOC) would save the Commonwealth a small fortune in medical expenses let alone the expensive and unnecessary security measures. Older individuals cost more in medical care and if put into the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services - most medical expenses would be covered by Medicare and/or eligibility for federal assistance, etc. Assisted living and/or stipends outside of the DOC would cost a great deal less than imprisonment with all of its security apparatus. This would also improve the quality of life for aging seniors and relieve the Commonwealth of a significant financial burden - a burden that has no return on investment. Such would be a win win for all concerned. Create a Statute that would parole deserving older individuals with a stipend (for living expense) of 1/2 of what it would cost to imprison them.

5. Deport convicted illegal aliens to their home countries after completing an agreed portion of their sentence. Or, support / sponsor Federal Legislation (make it a Federal Crime to illegally enter the United States) that would permit states to send all illegal into Federal Custody thus relieving the state of the expense. There are about four hundred illegal (400) in Massachusetts custody alone. This would make more funds available for state needs. This you may know was tried a few years ago but the feds weren't interested in the added expense.

All of the above would make more funds available for programs and vocational training for prisoners successful reentry into society and arguably reduce recidivism along with reducing the taxpayers expense but with a return on their investment. Thinking beyond retribution is a win win for all.

I am also enclosing copies of letters sent regarding a small sample of a few changes that many would like to see in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations that are being revised and promulgated by the Department of Correction. The Department continues to be stuck in the 19th century regarding prisoners access to technology (storage / memory / e-mail, etc.). They are also stuck within a Puritanical view of the human body and have difficulty accepting community standards when it come to publications and movies, etc.

Thank you for taking your valuable time to visit with our group. We will look forward to seeing and speaking with you again.

very truly yours,

September 20, 2016

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CONTRIBUTING REPRESENTATIVES

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