



# MAINE LEGISLATURE

STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

April 30, 2020

Governor Janet Mills  
Commissioner Randall Liberty  
Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew  
State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Governor Mills and Commissioners Liberty and Lambrew:

We are grateful for your leadership during this unprecedented time and for all the tireless work your teams are doing to keep Mainers healthy and safe. We know your dedication applies to all, regardless of where they reside in our state, including within our correctional facilities.

However, we are deeply concerned that our public health response may not go far enough to protect all those who work or reside in our correctional facilities, as well as their families and surrounding communities. As we continue to see in our long-term care facilities, congregate living spaces are extremely vulnerable to the spread of the novel coronavirus. If we do not take additional steps to prevent outbreaks before the virus is detected in our correctional facilities, it will be too late.

Our response within our correctional system is a key part of our overall public health strategy. To protect those who are incarcerated and all who interact with our correctional system, we recommend the following steps be taken.

First, we implement universal testing of our correctional facilities immediately. We know that screening for symptoms alone is inadequate because some who carry the virus do not exhibit symptoms, even as they are contagious. Everyone, including all personnel and inmates, should be tested.

Second, masks should be worn by correctional facility staff at all times. We have heard repeated reports from those within our correctional system that this is not happening consistently. Again, because we know that asymptomatic individuals can spread this virus, the appropriate use of personal protective equipment is a crucial step to preventing outbreaks.

Third, we urge you to implement compassionate release to allow for the release of inmates who do not pose a threat to public safety. These individuals should be screened based on their age, the time remaining on their sentence and any existing health challenges. We also recognize the importance of preventing further harm and maintaining our commitment to the safety and needs of victims. Compassionate release, which is being implemented in other states with proven results, is not the goal of the Secured Community Confinement Program, or SCCP. While we are pleased to see the number of those in SCCP increase, we believe compassionate release should be prioritized while we are in the midst of fighting a pandemic.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss the public health response within our correctional system with the Commissioners and a representative of the organization providing health care services in our correctional facilities.

We offer these requests in dedication to protecting public health and safety. We are all in this together.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Babbidge  
State Representative

Craig Hickman  
State Representative

Donna Bailey  
State Representative

Colleen Madigan  
State Representative

Shenna Bellows  
State Senator

Michele Meyer  
State Representative

Michael Carpenter  
State Senator

Victoria Morales  
State Representative

Barbara Cardone  
State Representative

Anne Perry  
State Representative

Pinny Beebe-Center  
State Representative

Bill Pluecker  
State Representative

Janice Cooper  
State Representative

Lois Reckitt  
State Representative

Margaret Craven  
State Representative

Braden Sharpe  
State Representative

Jeff Evangelos  
State Representative

Rachel Talbot Ross  
State Representative

Geoff Gratwick  
State Senator

Holly Stover  
State Representative

Thom Harnett  
State Representative

Charlotte Warren  
State Representative