

# **The Politics of Justice:**

## **Comprehensive Criminal Justice Reform in Massachusetts**

First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington  
Saturday, March 25, 2017

*Note: The smaller a room number, the closer it is to the sanctuary.*

**12:45-1:15 p.m.: Networking and Refreshments** (Room #2 – Vestry)

**1:15-3:05 p.m.: Welcome and Panel** – Moderated by Lori Kenschaft (Room #1 – Sanctuary)

Opening words by Rev. Marta Morris Flanagan and Rep. Dave Rogers

Sharing stories with Cassandra Bensahih and Susan Tordella

Sen. Will Brownsberger on the Council of State Governments bill

Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan on restorative justice

Idris Abdullah of Teens Leading the Way on juvenile justice

Cindy Friedman, chief of staff to Sen. Ken Donnelly, on Sen. Donnelly's bills to establish a Center of Excellence in Community Policing and Behavioral Health and pretrial reform

Cassandra Bensahih of EPOCA and Jobs Not Jails on the Justice Reinvestment Act

Sen. Will Brownsberger on his larger vision and his bill to reduce the criminalization of poverty

Rahsaan Hall, Director of the ACLU-MA's Racial Justice Program, on the racial justice implications of this season's proposed legislation

**3:05-3:25 p.m.: Break/Refreshments**

**3:25-4:30 p.m.: Topical Groups**

Sen. Will Brownsberger on the CSG bill and his larger vision (Room #6 – Bailey Room)

Erin Freeborn, Executive Director of Communities for Restorative Justice (C4RJ), on restorative justice (Room #2 – Vestry)

Idris Abdullah on juvenile justice (Room #3 – Grady Room)

Cindy Friedman on policing & behavioral health and pretrial reform (Room #4 – Parlor)

Cassandra Bensahih on the Justice Reinvestment Act (Room #5 – May Room)

Rahsaan Hall on racial justice (Room #1 – Sanctuary)

**4:30-5:00 p.m.: Workshop on Interacting Effectively with Legislators** with Rep. Dave Rogers, Colleen Kirby, and Bill Gardiner (Room #4 – Parlor)

**Networking and Refreshments** (Room #2 – Vestry)

## Today's Speakers and Presenters

**Lori Kenschaft**, the panel's moderator, is the coordinator of the Mass Incarceration Working Group of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington.

**Rev. Marta Morris Flanagan** is First Parish Arlington's minister.

**Rep. Dave Rogers** represents Belmont and parts of Arlington and Cambridge. He filed pretrial and parole reform bills and is also the Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Marijuana Policy.

**Cassandra Bensahih** is the Executive Director of EPOCA (Ex-prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement), which creates resources and opportunities for former prisoners and helps them develop leadership skills and power to create positive changes. She is also a key organizer for the Jobs Not Jails Coalition, a statewide campaign to end mass incarceration and fund job creation.

**Susan Tordella** is the legislative director of EMIT (End Mass Incarceration Together), a working group of UU Mass Action, the statewide Unitarian Universalist social justice network.

**Sen. Will Brownsberger** is co-chair of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary and represents Belmont, Watertown, and part of Boston. Before joining the Massachusetts legislature in 2007, he worked as a defense attorney (receiving the Liacos Award for protecting the constitutional rights of criminal defendants) and served for six years as the Massachusetts Assistant Attorney General.

**Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan** is a career prosecutor for Middlesex County, which includes more than a quarter of the population of Massachusetts. Governor Deval Patrick appointed her to the position of District Attorney in 2013 and she was elected to this position in 2014. She has supported the development and use of restorative justice practices.

**Idris Abdullah** is currently finishing his sophomore year at UMass Boston, where he is majoring in English and hopes to add a dual major of Education. He currently works at the YMCA of Greater Boston as a group leader in an afterschool program. He has worked with Teens Leading The Way (TLTW) for about a year and plans to be a published novelist and high school English teacher.

**Cindy Friedman** is the chief of staff to Senator Ken Donnelly. She is responsible for overseeing the senator's legislative priorities, with a specific focus on mental health and labor and workforce development. She has worked with the senator for the past nine years to develop his mental health legislation and position papers and is the spokesperson for Senator Donnelly on these issues and many others.

**Rahsaan Hall** is the Director of the Racial Justice Program for the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts. He previously served as the Deputy Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, where he headed up the Voting Rights Project, and as an Assistant District Attorney for the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office.

**Erin Freeborn** is the Executive Director of Communities for Restorative Justice (C4RJ). She previously served as executive director of Juvenile Court Restorative Justice Diversion in Lowell, now known as Our Restorative Justice (OurRJ). Erin received her J.D. from Northeastern University, with a focus in restorative justice, and also holds a master's of divinity degree from Boston University.

**Colleen Kirby** is the criminal justice legislative specialist for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts and a member of First Parish Arlington's Mass Incarceration Working Group.

**Rev. Bill Gardiner** is a retired Unitarian Universalist minister and a member of both EMIT and First Parish Arlington's Mass Incarceration Working Group.

## What Would Comprehensive Criminal Justice Reform Look Like?

The following bills indicate the range of issues that would need to be part of truly comprehensive reform. This list is far from exhaustive, and nearly all successful bills evolve during the legislative process. In addition, what happens in the criminal justice system is affected by many factors that are not part of the criminal justice system *per se*, such as the availability of treatment for substance use disorders, the effects of poverty on children's health and development, and the growing scarcity of good jobs for less educated people. Passing bills that address the following issues would, though, make a real difference.

### Featured Bills:

- 1) **Implement the Recommendations of the Council of State Governments' Massachusetts Criminal Justice Review.** Key provisions include: Increase the incentives for incarcerated people to participate in and finish programs by earning "good time" that reduces their sentences. Give some people sentenced under mandatory minimum laws access to work release and parole before the full mandatory minimum time is served. Make parole the default. Create a new system of compliance credits that can reduce the time someone is on parole or post-incarceration probation. Authorize courts to order individuals who are awaiting trial to participate in specific programs as a condition of their release on bail. H.74, filed by Gov. Charles Baker
- 2) **Promote Restorative Justice.** H.793, filed by Rep. Sean Garballey with 55 cosponsors ✧ S.847 filed by Sen. James Eldridge with 18 cosponsors
- 3) **Allow the Expungement of Juvenile Records and Records Created by Error or Fraud.** H.2309, filed by Rep. Kay Khan with 58 cosponsors ✧ S.944, filed by Sen. Karen Spilka with 31 cosponsors
- 4) **Establish a Center of Excellence in Community Policing and Behavioral Health.** H.2401, filed by Rep. Liz Malia and Rep. Byron Rushing with 22 cosponsors ✧ S.1090, filed by Sen. Ken Donnelly with 14 cosponsors
- 5) **Reform Pretrial Process.** Hold people before trial, when according to the Constitution they are presumed innocent, only if there is evidence that they pose a flight risk or a risk to the community, not just for financial reasons. H.3120, filed by Rep. Dave Rogers and Rep. Jay Livingstone with 30 cosponsors ✧ S.834, filed by Sen. Ken Donnelly with 34 cosponsors
- 6) **Justice Reinvestment Act.** Supported by the Jobs Not Jails Coalition: End mandatory minimums for non-violent drug offenses. Raise the felony threshold (one of the lowest in the nation) from \$250 to \$1,500. Reduce or end probation and parole fees. Decrease the time until CORI records can be sealed. Use savings from these measures to increase education, job training, job creation, and job placement for prisoners and former prisoners. H.2308, filed by Rep. Mary Keefe with 63 cosponsors ✧ S.791, filed by Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz with 42 cosponsors
- 7) **Reduce the Criminalization of Poverty.** Key provisions include: Eliminate some fees and decrease others. Waive court fees and fines if they would cause hardship to a person or their family or dependents. Reduce the use of driver's license suspension as a penalty for offenses unrelated to driving. Raise the felony threshold from \$250 to \$1,500. Reduce instances where minor or long-past offenses might prevent a person from obtaining jobs or housing. H.2359, filed by Rep. Chynah Tyler with 31 cosponsors ✧ S.777, filed by Sen. Will Brownsberger with 41 cosponsors

### **Some Other Key Bills:**

- 8) **Collect Data on Traffic and Pedestrian Stops and Prohibit Racial and Other Profiling.** H.2506, filed by Rep. Byron Rushing with 22 cosponsors ✧ S.789, filed by Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz with 18 cosponsors
- 9) **Improve the Collection, Accuracy, and Public Availability of Arrest Data.** H.953, filed by Rep. Byron Rushing with 36 cosponsors ✧ S.1681, filed by Sen. Will Brownsberger with 12 cosponsors
- 10) **Pass the Juvenile Justice Omnibus Bill.** Raise the lower age of juvenile jurisdiction from 7 to 12. Decriminalize offenses that for adults have only civil penalties. Create a task force to evaluate juvenile justice policies. Create a parent-child testimonial privilege, so that parents cannot be required to testify against their child. Codify the policies banning indiscriminate shackling and involuntary solitary confinement for juveniles. Allow courts to consider age as a mitigating factor for young adults and require prisons and houses of correction to provide age-appropriate programming for young adults under age 26. Improve sealing of juvenile records and allow expungement of certain records. House bill only: Require agencies to collect and report better data. Senate bill only: Raise the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction for lesser offences from 18 to 21. Decriminalize student non-violent and verbal misbehavior in schools and sexual activities between adolescents who are close in age. Set requirements on agreements between school districts and police departments. Codify the right to counsel at parole hearings for individuals convicted of murder prior to age 18 and serving life sentences. H.3079, filed by Rep. Kay Khan with 26 cosponsors ✧ S.947, filed by Sen. Karen Spilka with 21 cosponsors
- 11) **End Mandatory Minimums for Drug Sentences.** H.741, filed by Rep. Evandro Carvalho with 49 cosponsors ✧ S.819, filed by Sen. Cynthia Creem with 33 cosponsors
- 12) **Encourage Diversion to Treatment for People with Substance Use Disorders.** H.2181, filed by Rep. Liz Malia with 58 cosponsors
- 13) **Ensure Appropriate Use of Segregation (Solitary Confinement).** H.3071, filed by Rep. Russell Holmes with 14 cosponsors ✧ S.1306, filed by Sen. Jamie Eldridge with 19 cosponsors
- 14) **Provide for Medical Release of Terminally Ill and Incapacitated Prisoners.** H.794 filed by Rep. Sean Garballey with 16 cosponsors ✧ S.874, filed by Sen. Pat Jehlen with 20 cosponsors
- 15) **Reform Parole.** Key provisions include: Increase the number of people on the Parole Board to nine, so cases will be heard more quickly, and include at least three members with expertise in psychiatry, psychology, social work, or the treatment of substance use disorders. A parole permit shall be granted at a prisoner's first date of parole eligibility unless there is clear and convincing evidence that the individual will not live at liberty without violating the law. Parole guidelines and data shall be publicly available. H.3121, filed by Rep. Dave Rogers with 15 cosponsors ✧ S.779, filed by Sen. Will Brownsberger with 7 cosponsors

## Which Bills Did Your State Representative Sponsor or Cosponsor?

*The numbers refer to the list of bills on pp. 3-4. Bill #1 has no co-sponsors.*

<b>Rep. James Arciero</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Cory Atkins</b>	Cosponsor: #3
<b>Rep. Bruce Ayers</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Ruth Balsler</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
<b>Rep. Christine Barber</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14
<b>Rep. Jen Benson</b>	Cosponsor: #3, 4, 11, 13
<b>Rep. Paul Brodeur</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 5, 12, 15
<b>Rep. Thomas Calter</b>	Cosponsor: #5, 12, 14
<b>Rep. Kate Campanale</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Linda Dean Campbell</b>	Cosponsor: #4, 10, 13, 13
<b>Rep. Evandro Carvalho</b>	Sponsor: #11 Cosponsor: #3, 6, 8, 9
<b>Rep. Gerard Cassidy</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Tackey Chan</b>	Cosponsor: #12
<b>Rep. Nick Collins</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Mike Connolly</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
<b>Rep. Edward Coppinger</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 7, 12
<b>Rep. Claire Cronin</b>	Cosponsor: none (Judiciary Committee Chair)
<b>Rep. Daniel Cullinane</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 6, 7, 11, 15
<b>Rep. Josh Cutler</b>	Cosponsor: #3, 12
<b>Rep. Michael Day</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 4, 9, 11, 12 (Judiciary Committee member)
<b>Rep. Marjorie Decker</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
<b>Rep. Brain Dempsey</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Diana DiZoglio</b>	Cosponsor: #2
<b>Rep. Daniel Donahue</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 12
<b>Rep. Paul Donato</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 12
<b>Rep. Shawn Dooley</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Michelle DuBois</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12
<b>Rep. Carolyn Dykema</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 5, 10
<b>Rep. Lori Ehrlich</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Ryan Fattman</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Kimberly Ferguson</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Dylan Fernandes</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13
<b>Rep. Ann-Margaret Ferrante</b>	Cosponsor: #9, 12
<b>Rep. William Galvin</b>	Cosponsor: #4
<b>Rep. Sean Garballey</b>	Sponsor: #2, 14 Cosponsor: #3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11
<b>Rep. Denise Garlick</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Carmine Gentile</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14
<b>Rep. Thomas Golden</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Ken Gordon</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14
<b>Rep. Danielle Gregoire</b>	Cosponsor: #3, 5, 6
<b>Rep. Sheila Harrington</b>	Cosponsor: none (Judiciary Committee member)
<b>Rep. Stephan Hay</b>	Cosponsor: #6, 9

<b>Rep. Jonathan Hecht</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15
<b>Rep. Russell Holmes</b>	Sponsor: #13 Cosponsor: #2, 6, 7, 9
<b>Rep. Kevin Honan</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 12
<b>Rep. Daniel Hunt</b>	Cosponsor: #6, 11, 12 (Judiciary Committee member)
<b>Rep. Louis Kafka</b>	Cosponsor: #3, 12
<b>Rep. Jay Kaufman</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
<b>Rep. Mary Keefe</b>	Sponsor: #6 Cosponsor: #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
<b>Rep. Peter Kocot</b>	Cosponsor: #5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11
<b>Rep. James Kelcourse</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Kay Khan</b>	Sponsor: #3, 10 Cosponsor: #2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15
<b>Rep. Stephen Kulik</b>	Cosponsor: #6, 12
<b>Rep. John Lawn</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11
<b>Rep. Jack Lewis</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
<b>Rep. David Paul Linsky</b>	Cosponsor: #3, 6, 10
<b>Rep. Jay Livingstone</b>	Sponsor: #5 Cosponsor: #2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14
<b>Rep. Adrian Madaro</b>	Cosponsor: #3, 6, 7, 9, 11
<b>Rep. John Mahoney</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 6, 11, 12
<b>Rep. Liz Malia</b>	Sponsor: #4, 13 Cosponsor: #3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13
<b>Rep. Ronald Mariano</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Paul McMurtry</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3
<b>Rep. James Miceli</b>	Cosponsor: #12
<b>Rep. Aaron Michlewitz</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Leonard Mirra</b>	Cosponsor: #3
<b>Rep. Joan Meschino</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Rady Mom</b>	Cosponsor: #10 (Judiciary Committee member)
<b>Rep. Michael Moran</b>	Cosponsor: #11
<b>Rep. David Muradian</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. James Murphy</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Brian Murray</b>	Cosponsor: #3, 6
<b>Rep. David Nangle</b>	Cosponsor: #2
<b>Rep. James O'Day</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11
<b>Rep. Alice Hanlon Peisch</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 5, 11
<b>Rep. William Smitty Pignatelli</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 9, 14
<b>Rep. Denise Provost</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15
<b>Rep. Dave Rogers</b>	Sponsor: #5, 15 Cosponsor: #2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
<b>Rep. John Rogers</b>	Cosponsor: #3
<b>Rep. Dan Ryan</b>	Cosponsor: #3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
<b>Rep. Byron Rushing</b>	Sponsor: #8, 9 Cosponsor: #3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11
<b>Rep. Jeffrey Sanchez</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Angelo Scaccia</b>	Cosponsor: #12, 14
<b>Rep. Frank Israel Smizik</b>	Cosponsor: #3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13
<b>Rep. Thomas Stanley</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 8, 14
<b>Rep. Tim Toomey</b>	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Chynah Tyler</b>	Sponsor: #7 Cosponsor: #1
<b>Rep. David Vieira</b>	Cosponsor: #2
<b>Rep. Chris Walsh</b>	Cosponsor: #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13

## Help Build Momentum in the House!

The House is likely to pose the most challenging hurdles for good bills. Here are some ways you can help them keep moving.

**(A) Contact your state representative.** Use pp. 3-6 to learn which of the key bills, if any, they sponsored or cosponsored. Don't know who your state rep is? Look them up at <https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Search> . And put their office number in your phone!

1. **Ask them to deepen their support.** Call their office and tell their staff person three things:
  - a. Your name and that you are a constituent.
  - b. You want to thank your representative for cosponsoring bills that would (describe what the bills would do).
  - c. Ask them whether your representative is willing to tell the chair of the appropriate committee (usually the Judiciary Committee, but see the list on p. 8) that they would like these bills to be reported out favorably.
  - d. Ask whether your representative is willing to tell the Speaker that they would like these bills to be brought to the floor for a vote this legislative season.
  - e. If the staff person says they don't know the answers to these questions, ask them to find out and call you back, and give them your phone number.
2. **Ask them to broaden their support.** Choose three bills your representative did not cosponsor that you particularly care about. Call their office and tell their staff person four things:
  - a. Your name and that you are a constituent.
  - b. You want to thank the representative for cosponsoring bills that would (describe what the bills would do).
  - c. You want your representative to support comprehensive criminal justice reform that would make our system more fair and effective.
  - d. Ask whether the representative supports the three bills you've chosen. Explain the goal of each bill and give the staff person the bill number that starts with H (for House). If they say they don't know, ask them to find out and call you back, and give them your phone number.
    - Note: In some cases there are closely related bills on the same theme that your representative may support. If so, thank them for their support.

### **(B) Talk with your friends.**

1. **Tell people why you're concerned about these issues.** If they ask what they can do, ask them to talk with their representatives in the same ways you have. Even if they live in the same district and you know what responses they will get, every phone call helps build support.
2. **Connect with friends in key districts.** Look at the list of key members of the House on p. 8. Do you know anyone in these towns? If so, make a special effort to get them involved. (Note: Sometimes an entire town is one district, sometimes not. We didn't list precincts and wards, so you might want to ask your friend who their state rep is.)

**(C) Get connected.** Join the email lists of organizations that are working on issues you care about. (See the list of this forum's cosponsors on pp. 11-12.) They will let you know when the legislature is actively considering these issues and phone calls are most effective. But any time you can call is good! Everyone who is interested in criminal justice reform should sign up to receive the Criminal Justice Policy Coalition's weekly calendar at [www.cjpc.org](http://www.cjpc.org). Even if you never go to another event, you'll learn a lot about what's going on from their emails.

## Which Bills Went to Which Committee?

Most of the key bills went to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. The exceptions are:

**#4:** To establish a Center of Excellence in Community Policing and Behavioral Health (H.2401, S.1090) went to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security

**#8:** To collect data on traffic and pedestrian stops and prohibit racial and other profiling (House version only, H.2506) went to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security

**#9:** To improve the collection, accuracy, and public availability of arrest data (Senate version only, S.1681) went to the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

**#12:** To encourage diversion to treatment for people with substance use disorders (H.2181) went to the Joint Committee on Financial Services

**#13:** To ensure appropriate use of segregation (solitary confinement) (Senate version only, S.1306) went to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security

## Who Are Key Members of the House?

**Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo** (*Revere, Winthrop*)

### Judiciary Committee Members:

<b>Rep. Claire Cronin, Chair</b> ( <i>Brockton, Easton</i> )	Cosponsor: none, though she did file bills related to 3 and 14
<b>Rep. James Cantwell, Vice Chair</b> ( <i>Marshfield, Scituate</i> )	Cosponsor: #2, 4
<b>Rep. Michael Day</b> ( <i>Stoneham, Winchester</i> )	Cosponsor: #2, 4, 9, 11, 12
<b>Rep. Carole Fiola</b> ( <i>Fall River, Freetown</i> )	Cosponsor: #3
<b>Rep. Colleen Garry</b> ( <i>Dracut, Tyngsborough</i> )	Cosponsor: #3
<b>Rep. Shelia Harrington</b> ( <i>Ayer, Ashby, Dunstable, Groton, Pepperell, Townsend</i> )	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Daniel Hunt</b> ( <i>Boston, Quincy</i> )	Cosponsor: #6, 11, 12
<b>Rep. James Lyons</b> ( <i>Andover, Boxford, North Andover, Tewksbury</i> )	Cosponsor: none
<b>Rep. Rady Mom</b> ( <i>Lowell</i> )	Cosponsor: #10
<b>Rep. Paul Tucker</b> ( <i>Salem</i> )	Cosponsor: #2, 14
<b>Rep. Bud Williams</b> ( <i>Springfield</i> )	Cosponsor: #3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13



## The Financial Picture

Reducing incarceration would lead to significant financial savings in a few years, as facilities could be closed or shrunk and staff could be re-trained and re-directed for other purposes. In the long run, more adults would stay in the workforce and fewer children would be subjected to the trauma of losing a parent to incarceration, with vast positive ripple effects. In the short run, however, reducing incarceration will cost money.

- Alternatives to incarceration nearly always cost less than incarceration, but that doesn't mean they cost nothing. Providing mental health or substance abuse treatment in the community, for example, is much cheaper than locking someone up. Too often, though, people who need such support can't find it or can't afford it.
- Various programs for prisoners and ex-prisoners have been shown to reduce recidivism, including stable housing, education, job training, meaningful work (paid or volunteer), and substance abuse and mental health treatment. Often, though, these programs are full or unavailable.
- Improving any system requires at least staff time and attention, and often other resources. For example, better data collection requires computer hardware and software, as well as people to identify helpful questions and analyze the results.

***You can help** by contacting your state rep and senator and asking them to support the following budget proposals. The House will discuss budget issues in April and the Senate in May, so call soon!*

- Support the \$3.5 million in Governor Baker's budget to **implement the Council of State Governments recommendations.**
- Increase funding for the **Bureau of Substance Abuse Services**: \$5.5 million to expand the Access to Recovery Program, fund 3 new treatment centers, and provide NARCAN to treatment providers.
- Allocate \$8 million to expand a **statewide program that diverts non-violent offenders from jail to treatment.**
- Support Governor Baker's proposal of \$4 million for "**Learn to Earn,**" which would provide job training and other support services to unemployed and underemployed people.
- Increase funding for **job training for ex-prisoners and court involved youth** from \$250,000 to \$2 million.
- Allocate \$300,000 for a pilot program of **RSVP**, a violence-prevention program for incarcerated violent offenders that uses restorative justice principles and has been effective in San Francisco.

In addition, here are some fast-return ways that the criminal justice system could focus its resources where they are most needed and effective:

- Don't use court, prison, probation, and parole resources to try to collect fees and fines from low-income and indigent people.
- Avoid or minimize probation and parole supervision of low-risk individuals. Research shows these people are less likely to have future encounters with the law if they are allowed to get on with their lives rather than obligated to show up for various appointments.
- Don't hold people arrested for minor offenses in jail. Research shows that just two nights in jail can significantly disrupt people's lives (jobs, housing, children) and make criminal involvement more likely in the future.
- Use restorative justice to help victims heal, promote true accountability, and keep people out of the courts and free of a life-burdening criminal record

Finally, support the **Fair Share Amendment**, which would raise the state income tax rate on incomes of over \$1 million a year and dedicate the proceeds (nearly \$2 billion a year) to education and transportation.

*“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.” – Frederick Douglass*

## **Making Massachusetts Government Work For You**

### **1. Get to know your legislators.**

- Who are my legislators? You can look up your State Senator and Representative at <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator> . Put their phone number in your cellphone.
- Sign up for their email list, if they have one, so you know what they’re thinking and doing.
- Go to their office hours in your community. Look for the dates on their website or email list, or in your local newspaper.
- Set up a meeting with them or their aide at the State House.
- Call them, or send them a personal letter or email. Mass media like tweets, Facebook posts, online petitions, and mass emails are much less effective.
- Invite them to an event to speak or to learn about your issues of concern.
- Introduce them to people directly affected by an issue. Make hidden constituencies more visible.

### **2. Ask your legislators to support legislation and move it through the process.**

- Ask them to support an issue or bill. Find out whether they are a cosponsor on pp. 5-6 or at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/Search> – use a keyword or the bill number.
- If they support a bill, ask them to:
  - Tell the relevant committee chair that they want it to move this session.
  - Tell the Speaker of the House or Senate President that they want a vote this session.
  - Testify at a hearing or speak to the press.

### **3. What can you or your organization do to support an issue?**

- Write letters to the editor in your local paper or statewide papers.
- Meet with the editor of your local newspaper to inform them about the issue.
- Show up at a hearing. See the calendar at <https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings> .
- Testify at a hearing, either as an individual or representing an organization.
- Hold informational events, with a film, speaker, or panel. Invite your legislators.
- Stay informed and be a resource for your legislator.
- Be in it for the long haul.

### **4. Work with others and be creative.**

- Join local or statewide organizations that share your goals. (See the list on p. 11.)
- CEPS brought a traveling play “Mariposa and the Saint” to their legislators’ districts and invited them to attend.
- Black and Pink is setting up a solitary unit at the State House for legislators to experience.
- Organize or join a Day on the Hill lobby day.

*“If you’re not hopeful and optimistic, then you just give up. You have to take the long hard look and just believe that if you’re consistent, you will succeed.” – Rep. John Lewis*

Prepared by Colleen Kirby, criminal justice legislative specialist for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts and member of the Mass Incarceration Working Group of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington.

## We Thank All of Our Cosponsors!

### Organizations Focused on Criminal Justice Reform and Related Issues:

**C4RJ (Communities for Restorative Justice):** A partnership of community members and police departments that offers restorative justice in 18 communities.

**CEPS (Coalition for Effective Public Safety):** A coalition of formerly incarcerated people, friends and relatives of prisoners, human rights activists, advocates, and program providers that works for systemic change.

**CfJJ (Citizens for Juvenile Justice):** Improves the juvenile justice system in Massachusetts by advocating, convening people, conducting research, and educating the public.

**CJPC (Criminal Justice Policy Coalition):** Promotes effective, just, and humane criminal justice policies in Massachusetts. *Anyone who is interested in criminal justice reform should sign up to receive CJPC's weekly calendar at [www.cjpc.org](http://www.cjpc.org).*

**EMIT (End Mass Incarceration Together):** A working group of UU Mass Action (the statewide Unitarian Universalist social justice network) that seeks to end mass incarceration through advocacy and education of legislators, their staff, and the public.

**EPOCA (Ex-Prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement):** Based in Worcester, creates resources and opportunities for former prisoners and helps them develop leadership skills and power to create positive changes.

**First Unitarian Society of Newton Criminal Justice Advocacy Team:** Hosts a speakers series on a wide variety of topics related to ending mass incarceration and promoting better alternatives.

**Jobs Not Jails:** A statewide coalition, including many formerly incarcerated people and their allies, that seeks to end mass incarceration and fund job creation.

**MA Anti-Shackling Coalition:** Seeks universal enforcement of the 2014 law limiting the shackling of women who are pregnant, in labor, or postpartum, and generally promotes the health of pregnant women.

**NASW-MA (National Association of Social Workers, Massachusetts Chapter) Criminal Justice Committee:** Organizes social workers to address, on both practice and policy levels, excessive incarceration and excessive criminalization of people with mental illness and substance use disorders.

**Prisoners' Legal Services:** Promotes the safe, humane and lawful treatment of Massachusetts prisoners through civil rights litigation, administrative advocacy, client counseling, and outreach to policy makers and the public.

**Restorative Justice Coalition of Massachusetts:** A group of restorative justice enthusiasts, advocates, and practitioners seeking to shape restorative justice legislation for the Commonwealth; for more information or to join a monthly conference call, contact [jlarsonsawin@c4rj.com](mailto:jlarsonsawin@c4rj.com).

**Restorative Justice RSVP:** Advocates to bring to Massachusetts prisons RSVP, a program for violent offenders that uses restorative justice principles and practices to prevent future violence.

**Teens Leading the Way:** A statewide, youth-led coalition that seeks to empower young people to create lasting change through policy-making.

### **Other Organizations:**

**ACLU-MA (American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts):** Defends the principles enshrined in the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights as well as the U.S. Constitution, including racial justice, police accountability, privacy, voting rights, immigrants' rights, freedom of expression and association, and ending the drug war and death penalty.

**ACMI (Arlington Community Media Incorporated):** Arlington's cable TV channel, which is recording today's panel and has created several other programs related to criminal justice reform.

**Arlington Human Rights Commission:** Promotes the fair and equal treatment of individuals in Arlington and investigates complaints related to these issues.

**Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice:** Affiliated with Harvard University, creates bridges between scholarship, law, policy, and practice to promote justice for all.

**First Parish in Lexington:** A Unitarian Universalist congregation with an active group working on criminal justice issues.

**GBIO (Greater Boston Interfaith Organization):** Coalesces, trains, and organizes the communities of Greater Boston across religious, racial, ethnic, class, and neighborhood lines for the public good, develops local leadership and organized power to fight for social justice.

**Leagues of Women Voters of Massachusetts, Arlington, and Winchester:** Encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in their government.

**MCAN (Massachusetts Communities Action Network):** A network of faith-based community organizations working for economic and racial justice, including Jobs Not Jails.

**Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts:** Concerned citizens organized to promote social justice, political reform, and progressive values throughout the Commonwealth, focusing on local and state-level issues.

**Wicked Sober:** Helps people struggling with drug and alcohol dependency by offering information and advice, free consultations for families, friends, and the addict or alcoholic themselves, and assistance in locating the best treatment program for each individual.

**Women's League of Peace and Freedom, Boston Branch:** Envisions a transformed world at peace, where there is racial, social, and economic justice for all people everywhere.

*This forum was organized by the Mass Incarceration Working Group of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington. Our mission is to help build a movement to end mass incarceration in Massachusetts.*

*Among other things, we maintain a list of about 600 people to whom we send 1-3 emails a month with information about action opportunities related to ending mass incarceration and creating better alternatives.*

*To join this list or contact us, email [end-mass-incarceration@firstparish.info](mailto:end-mass-incarceration@firstparish.info).*