

# 18 STEPS TO DECARCERATION IN MAINE!

## 1. INVEST IN YOUTH

Implement restorative justice in schools; reform school criteria to accurately reflect history; provide free or affordable higher education to all; fund community centers to care for youth; provide extra supports for kids with incarcerated parents; eradicate juvenile incarceration; extend diversion-over-incarceration to include emerging adults (18-27 y/o);

## 2. INVEST IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Invest in jobs that pay a living wage, housing, healthcare, and transportation; build a mental health response network; expand free access to SUD treatment programs; transform foster care;

## 3. DECRIMINALIZE PEOPLE AND DEMILITARIZE SYSTEMS

Decriminalize drugs, sex work, homelessness, and undocumented status; prioritize alternatives to incarceration; demilitarize the police and transform police culture; fund non-police crisis response systems; build an effective public defender system; eliminate cash bail;

## 4. BUILD COMMUNITY-BASED SAFETY AND RESPONSES TO HARM

Research the factors that drive contact with the criminal legal system and incarceration; create individual and community/neighborhood safety plans; form community-building circles throughout the state; develop an effective response to domestic violence and sexual abuse; create broader restorative options for addressing harm; build a transformative justice alternative to incarceration; elect DAs who are committed to RJ and diversion pathways; enact sane gun laws; create community hubs for cross-race and -class conversations; launch a Truth Telling initiative for police violence and racist injustices; recognize tribal sovereignty;

## 5. CONFRONT GROWING WEALTH INEQUALITY

Revise the tax code; reduce corporate control of real estate; support alternative forms of ownership; rethink public financing;

## 6. BUILD A RESTORATIVE PRISON CULTURE

Expand trauma-healing programs for residents and staff; implement restorative community-building and generative dialogue circles; build a team of RJ practitioners to address harm; support creative staff-resident collaborations; expand the "principal of normality" throughout facilities; allow residents to personalize their living quarters; demilitarize staff uniforms; base Corrections Officer training on supportive techniques; encourage the universal use of first names;

## 7. NORMALIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CARCERAL SPACES

Initiate or expand formalized peer mentorship training; shift policy to allow peer crisis intervention; initiate or expand professional training opportunities; allow incarcerated people to become vocational training instructors; open opportunities for residents to work for outside organizations; expand access to higher education inside;

## 8. ENHANCE COMMUNITY AND FAMILY CONNECTIONS INSIDE

Change the narrative about incarcerated people; expand victim offender dialogue; create surrogate avenues for victim offender dialogue; fully revamp visitation; make conjugal visits available; set up educational parenting visits; implement a restorative conference-type process for family members; make phone and video calls free; grant all residents access to email; create mentoring opportunities between adult and juvenile facilities; support full civic engagement as Maine citizens; open public institutions to the public; bring back regular furloughs; allow incarcerated people to teach across the walls;

## 9. SUPPORT HEALTHY LIVING IN JAILS AND PRISONS

Improve medical and mental health services inside; introduce more healthful food; bring back the real care package system;

10.

### **MOVE TOWARD DECARCERATION**

Establish a reentry plan at the time of admission for every resident; make security classifications transparent; enact Second Chance policies; retroactively cap sentences for crimes committed by “emerging adults”; instate compassionate geriatric release; reinstate parole; close prisons as their populations dwindle;

11.

### **DESTIGMATIZE INCARCERATED PEOPLE, FOCUSING ON WOMEN**

Eradicate stigmatizing language; interrupt misogynistic language for formerly incarcerated women; pass the primary caregiver bill; make justice-impacted people a protected class;

12.

### **REFORM POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION POLICIES**

Eradicate reincarceration for technical violations of probation; abolish income withholding; remove fee requirements from probation; review and revise restitution policies; expand the supervised community confinement program; re-establish parole;

13.

### **OPEN HOUSING TO FORMERLY INCARCERATED PEOPLE**

Support MPRN’s forthcoming legislation; establish independently run 3/4 houses; remove all barriers to low rent, subsidized, and public housing; revive the Fair Chance Housing Act; provide meaningful funding for returning community members; provide low interest loans with matched funding for first-time home buyers; build reentry bridges for families; create and disseminate an annual reentry information booklet;

14.

### **OPEN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCARCERATED PEOPLE**

Expand Ban The Box; remove all the barriers to certification unrelated to public safety; eliminate mandatory waiting periods for many professions; integrate the business community with release; allow incarcerated people to hold jobs on the outside; educate business owners and managers about existing incentives;

15.

### **DECRIMINALIZE DRIVING OFFENSES, SUPPORT TRANSPORTATION**

Invest in public transport; develop private-public transport partnerships; create a low interest loan fund; delink traffic violations from probation revocations; remove excessive fines for traffic violations; limit license suspensions;

16.

### **IMPROVE MEDICAL CARE AND WELLBEING ON THE INSIDE**

Assign Health Navigators to returning citizens; develop a transitional health care plan; extend Maine care for the first year of reentry;

17.

### **SUPPORT AND IMPROVE REENTRY HOUSING AND SERVICES**

Support better coordinated reentry services; establish direct support for incarcerated people and their families; form reentry community support groups in every County; offer free life skills courses; Implement a reparative reintegration process; provide special support for turning mothers;

18.

### **REFORM THE CRIMINAL CODE TOWARD ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPAIR**

Retroactively eradicate truth in sentencing laws, life without parole, and lengthy sentences for emerging adults; vastly reduce the length of sentences and the number of offenses that carry a prison sentence; cap all sentences at 45 years; reinstate presumptive parole; expand good time credits; amend Maine’s Constitution to allow early safe release.

**& FREEDOM  
CAPTIVITY**

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