



November 17, 2020

The Honorable Charlie Baker
Governor
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
State House Room 360
Boston, Massachusetts, 02133

Dear Governor Baker,

In light of the current surge in cases of COVID-19, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts implores you to do what is in your power to swiftly and safely reduce the prison population in Massachusetts. Given what we know about prison environments and the way the virus spreads, there is an urgent need to reduce this population.

We believe that maintaining people in custody under conditions that pose a high risk to their health and lives is inhumane, and it is inconsistent with the values underpinning positions the League of Women Voters has taken on criminal justice issues. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports measures to protect the civil and individual rights of the offender and to promote the offender's rehabilitation through individualized treatment.

In their November 10, 2020 letter to you, U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley and Suffolk District Attorney Rachael Rollins made a compelling case for exercising your authority to immediately release groups of people who do not pose a threat to community safety. On behalf of our 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, we strongly support their impassioned plea, and we urge you to take action before the spread of COVID-19 in Massachusetts prisons eliminates all reasonable options for controlling it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Judith Zaunbrecher".

Judith Zaunbrecher
Co-President

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Elizabeth L. Foster-Nolan".

Elizabeth Foster-Nolan
Co-President