



The Honorable Maura T. Healey
Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room #280
Boston, MA 02133

January 10, 2023

Dear Governor Healey,

We at the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) congratulate you on your successful campaign and wish you well in your governorship.

As you develop your leadership team and policy priorities, we ask you to turn your attention to the Department of Correction (DOC) and the management of the Commonwealth's correctional facilities. By all accounts, treatment of those in custody is often excessively punitive, physical and mental health care is generally inadequate, and family connections are often limited and/or restricted unnecessarily.

The League is particularly concerned about the persistent overuse of solitary confinement, which is employed at different Massachusetts correctional facilities under different names. Conditions in solitary confinement are harsh and inhumane, and time spent in those units disrupts educational programming and can derail a person's preparation for reintegration into society. Faced with mounting criticism of the way solitary confinement is used in the Commonwealth, in June of 2021, DOC announced their intention to end restrictive housing, defined as being held in a cell for more than 22 hours a day. However, there was no commitment to a firm time line for reforms and no promise to eliminate other categories of segregated housing that have been established under different names with in-cell time limits slightly lower than 22 hours per day. People who are or have been incarcerated along with those who regularly visit correctional facilities continue to report that solitary confinement remains prevalent throughout the system.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts comprises 45 local Leagues and three thousand members. We have long advocated for a sound corrections system that provides opportunities for the rehabilitation of adults and juveniles, measures to protect the civil and individual rights of the individual, and facilities that provide sufficient prison space to ensure humane living conditions for people who are incarcerated.

We urge you to do the following:

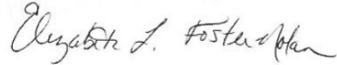
- Undertake a comprehensive review of management practices and living conditions at DOC's correctional facilities
- Eliminate the systemic defects that have led to reliance on excessive punishment

- Refocus operations on education and rehabilitation

Most importantly, we ask you to ensure that the managers you put in place at the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) and DOC are committed to achieving these goals.

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Foster-Nolan
President

CC: Terence Reidy
Secretary of Public Safety and Security