

NORFOLK INMATE COUNCIL

(Executive Board)

Reduction in Prisoner Jobs

(Negative Implications)

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Reduction in Prisoner Jobs

(Negative Implications)

On July 1, 2025 the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) decided to reduce prisoner jobs. This effected MCI-Norfolk in a multitude of Negative ways. Moral in the prison continues to decline as recent Quarterly Report from MCI-Norfolk indicates an erosion from good to good-poor for staff and prisoners alike.(Poor being the lowest rating for moral.)

Methodology:

To assemble this report has been through numerous public records with the DOC over a year. Data has been presented in a true and factual manner as to information and data provided. The premise is that the DOC has cut over one half the prisoner jobs at one facility alone however staff has reduced little in total. Upper level administrators/managers and high ranking correctional staff have increased in number while performing the same duties and responsibilities for additional compensation as Correctional Officer I.(CO. I)(The lowest ranking officers in the DOC).

Prisoner Job Matrix Reduction:

Prisoner jobs were reduced (July 2025) at MCI-Norfolk from approximately 800 to 385. This is a reduction of better than 53% or a jobless rate of more than 50% at MCI-Norfolk.(MassCor, Industries provides about half the prisoner jobs in the facility). This action creates idle time and desperation to acquire funds, for basic daily living in prison, TV's, Fans, toiletries and postage. Prisoner employment is a valuable tool in teaching a work ethic to prisoners at a very inexpensive cost. Currently job matrix lists a budget of \$7,416.03 weekly for prisoners compared to \$11,000 before the July 2025 job reduction. It should also be noted that in the same approximate time frame a new Director's position has been created (\$118,450) a year base pay. This cut in prisoner jobs appears to have provided funding for this new Manger position. Which shifted personnel from another closed prison.

2012 to 2025:

The rational for compare and contrast 2012 to 2025 is MCI-Norfolk and the DOC had the greatest number of prisoners in 2012 (11,723) 2025 (6168). However even with this dramatic reduction of prisoners and prisons the DOC continues to balloon in it's budget. The following data speaks to this.

	2012	2025	% Change
Number of prisoners	11,723	6,168	-47%
MCI-Norfolk Prisoners	1,504	1,144	-28%
DOC Staff	4966	3917	-21%
MCI-Norfolk Staff	406	409	+1%
Milford Headquarters	579	946 (*2023)	+63%
Number of Prisons with prisoners	23	13	-43%
Budget	\$539 Million	\$831 Million	+54%

Senior Staffing (Managers, Captains, Lieutenants, Sergeants) Increases:

The constant senior staff increases are evident with Milford Headquarters staff increase of 63%. Milford HQ now micro-manages prisons to justify their positions, creating a one size fits all approach. Thus eliminating the unique rehabilitative qualities of a community prison such as Norfolk. This now comes in the form of one job matrix for the whole DOC. This has contributed to the decrease in CO. I, morale. MCI-Norfolk senior positions have increased upper level staff positions by 17 since 2012. These 17 positions total approximately \$1,800,000 in tax dollars.

Negative Impact:

This negative action has manifested in the loss of jobs by 53% for prisoners. Creates desperation and as the first Superintendent of MCI-Norfolk termed it supports a criminal mind set. Prisoners are not being educated to work an honest job and live within their means. Prisoners arriving at MCI-Norfolk cannot find employment and resort to regressing or continuing past criminal behaviors of "hustling" to get by. Meaning selling drugs, gambling, making alcohol ("Home Brew") or stealing etc. to buy essentials. Once engaged in these behaviors it only supports a continuation of a criminal life style and enforcing that mind set/ethic. Also it is very difficult for many to stop this behavior once engaged due to the low prison wages.

Administration Views:

The Norfolk Inmate Council (NIC) have discussed the harms of not having the full jobs with the Administration it has been commented "A lot of these guys don't do anything anyways." However when staff spend numerous hours a day on YouTube and other web sites clearly this shows a clear lack of understanding how a prison operates. MCI-Norfolk total staffing has increased by 1% while the prison population has decreased by 23% with 3 housing units being repurposed for non housing, which no longer require 24 hours a day staffing.

Reassignment of Staff:

As prisons have closed ten facilities in total. Managers, have not been reduced but shifted and increased in remaining prisons as with the increase in Milford HQ. growing by 63% and at Norfolk by 25%. This clearly shows a lack of understanding in day to day prison operations and needs of CO.I's and prisoners mental health needs.

Sociological Impact:

The negative impact of loss of jobs also drives a prisons sociological dynamic. Idle time is a climate threat in prison facilities for substance use disorder (SUD's) and as MCI-Norfolk is struggling with as most institutions K2 (Synthetic Cannabis). Many of those suffering tell the NIC "We need to stay busy". However this move to decrease employment to well over 50% of prisoners only exasperates and fuels this issue. The Federal Bureau of Prisons encourages prisoners to work and find it essential in behavioral and rehabilitative development. This is viewed as teaching a work ethic to get up every day go some place and perform a task for pay. Prisoners at MCI-Norfolk for the most part no longer have this opportunity. In fact even though prisoners should be allowed to earn good time (EGT) up to 1/3 of their sentence this is almost never possible due to reduction in jobs and lack of

programming.

Plagued by rapidly deteriorating conditions in human warehousing. Poor conditions become cyclical and becomes excessively harsh with every new administrator. Administrators have become increasingly retributive in practice. Corporate punishment, taking privileges from everyone for the actions of the few. Defunding programs, cultural groups and any group which speaks out against Administration failures and harms. Instead for many prisoners planning their days around work and programs avoiding trouble for parole (release) purposes languish in a rudderless facility. Administrators with a lack of training and experience resort to punitive actions for all perceived infractions or irreverence. Having a failure to lead at Norfolk has caused multiple suicides, an escape attempt, alleged rape, and three fires. Anxiety, chaos and hopelessness persist in spite of Massachusetts being listed as the "best staffed prison system" by Prison Legal News. The lack of authentic therapeutic conditions in the DOC fuels this. Current Superintendent of MCI-Norfolk recently spoke to the renovations of the CSD Auditorium (\$300,000+) stating "It's going to be a real show piece for the Department". Nothing for the service to rehabilitation and care, which characterizes the Lack of moral compass of the DOC.

Prisoners Views:

The view of prisoners is this is designed to further drive the prison into a state of hopelessness, chaos and despair. Prisoners feel the administration does not want guys to do better, and grow as individuals because this is reducing the numbers of prisoners returning to custody and making it increasingly more difficult to justify the budget increases of 54% and prisoner decreases of 47% or about 5555 prisoners.

Summary:

As the months have passed by the reduction in jobs have had a clearer harmful impact in the daily life of MCI-Norfolk. Things that have been noticeable. Walks and stairs are no longer properly cleared of snow. Snow shoveling jobs have been cut when they only provided earned good time (EGT), (Thermal underwear, Hat, gloves). As one prisoner fell on ice and needed surgery for a broken elbow, this is also effecting the health and safety of the facility. Units are becoming dirtier and daily operations of the prison have failed. Officers are frustrated having lost in some cases 70% of their prisoner work force. Goose droppings are throughout the prison and trash everywhere. There was a time when everyone made fun of a Captain who would say "A clean prison is a safe prison". It appears this was truer than anyone knew.

Prison labor is a very low cost effective tool to educate a work ethic and thereby improving self esteem which the DOC has all but abandoned to increase and maintain managers and high ranking prison officials while ignoring the true impact on prisons. It is unrealistic to think the DOC will change without outside intervention.

Respectfully,



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Senior / Majority Chairman
Norfolk Inmate Council

cc: file