LIFER'S GROUP INC.

REPORT ON THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION'S EXPENDITURES AND STAFFING LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

Prepared For:

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The Lifer's Group Inc. welcomes any and all comments, criticisms, and/or corrections concerning this report. Please direct such feedback to: Chairman, Lifer's Group Inc., MCI-Norfolk, P.O. Box 43, Norfolk, MA 02056. Copies of this report are available upon request.

The Lifer's Group Inc. members express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to Lois Ahrens, Executive Director of The Real Cost of Prisons Project in Northampton for her uwavering support and trieless work for positve criminal just reform. Without Lois, our reports would be read and utilized by so many both inside and outside prison walls. Thank you Lois!!!!!

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HIGHLIGHTS

A LIFER'S GROUP INC. REPORT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION'S EXPENDITURES AND STAFFING LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

1. Introduction

In response to public records requests, the Department of Correction (DOC) provided data on the expenditures of funds and the staffing levels of Full-Time Employees (FTEs) by the DOC in Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025). Both the expenditures and staffing levels were reported for various categories. These categories are consistent with each Lifer's Group Inc. report on the expenditures and staffing levels of the DOC since 2014. [1]

The differences between years and the resultant percentage calculations for expenditures and staffing levels, the percentages for Fiscal Year 2025, the ratios of staffing levels and the differences in expenditures and staffing levels when compared to other fiscal years were computed by the author.

Note that Expenses and Expenditures are used interchangeably throughout this report when referring to funds spent by the DOC.

2. Fiscal Year 2025 DOC Expenditures

Category	Amount Spent	% of Total
Employee Expenses	475,316,578	56.1
Offender Health Care	257,039,956	30.4
Utility Expenses	29,872,161	3.5
Infrastructure Expenses	21,775,970	2.6
Other Expenses [2]	20,436,138	2.4
Offender Food Expenses	18,863,336	2.2
Offender Program Expenses [3]	17,722,199	2.1

2. Fiscal Year 2025 DOC Expenditures (cont.)

Administrative Expenses	4,642,521	.5
Legislative Earmarks [4]	1,325,000	.2
Total Expenses	$ 846,993,859	

Total expenditures in Fiscal 2025 increased by $56,869,890 or 7.2%. Seven categories increased in spending in Fiscal 2025 as compared to Fiscal 2024. They were: Offender Health Care Costs by 21.1%, Other Expenses by 16.6%, Offender Program Costs by 13.3%, Utilities by 8.6%, Employee Expenses by 2.4%, Offender Food Costs by 1.5% and Administrative Costs by .9%. The two categories which decreased were Legislative Earmarks by 64.6% and Infrastructure Costs by 16.6%.

In actual dollars spent in Fiscal 2025, the following four categories increased the most: Offender Health Care Costs by $44,780,380, Employee Expenses by $11,170,164, Other Expenses by $2,904,800 and Offender Program Costs by $2,078,972. While the costs of Offender Programs increased by more than $11,000,000 or 13%, the DOC still spent slightly more than 2¢ of every dollar on programs for incarcerated individuals.

3. DOC Staffing Levels For Fiscal 2025

The number and percentages for the DOC Full-Time Employees (FTEs) for Fiscal Year 2025 broke down as follows:

Category	Number	% of Total
Security Personnel [5]	2,663	66.8
Administrative Support	515	12.9
Maintenance	301	7.6
Management	213	5.4
CPO Staff [6]	207	5.2

3. DOC Staffing Levels For Fiscal 2025 (cont.)

Education Staff	85	2.1
Total FTEs	3,984	

The total number of FTEs decreased by 83 or 2.1% in Fiscal Year 2025 as compared to Fiscal Year 2024. Of the six categories of FTEs in Fiscal 2025, only one increased from Fiscal 2024 - Administrative Support by 6 or 1.2%. The remaining five categories decreased from Fiscal 2024 to Fiscal 2025: Security Personnel by 80 or 2.9%, CPO Staff by 5 or 2.4%, Maintenance by 2 or .7%, Management by 1 or .5% and Education Staff by 1 or 1.2%.

4. A Three Year Comparison of DOC Expenditures

The following three year comparison of DOC Expenditures includes data on the MA Custody Population as of January 1st of each fiscal year. The MA Custody Population is comprised of all prisoners housed in mA facilities; prisoners held out-of-state are, therefore, not included. The source for the custody population figures is the DOCs's Institution Fact Cards published as of January 1st of each year. While the custody population varies from day-to-day, the January 1st data has been utilized for each Lifer's Group Inc. report on the DOC's Expenditures and Staffing Levels since 2014 to ensure meaningfull and significant comparisons.

Expense Category	Fiscal 2025	Fiscal 2024	Fiscal 2023
Employee Expenses	475,316,578	464,146,414	452,502,896
Offender Health Care	257,039,956	212,259,576	198,046,633
Utilities	29,872,161	27,506,937	23,922,577
Infrastructure	21,775,970	26,106,048	24,801,278
Other Expenses	20,436,138	17,531,338	12,964,666
Offender Food Costs	18,863,336	18,591,977	18,513,595

4. A Three Year Comparison of DOC Expenditures (cont.)

	Fiscal 2025	Fiscal 2024	Fiscal 2023
Offender Program Exp.	17,722,199	15,643,227	9,437,102
Administrative Exp.	4,642,521	4,600,605	4,585,139
Legis. Earmarks	1,325,000	3,737,847	1,780,835
Totals	846,993,859	790,123,969	746,554,721
MA Custody Pop. 1/1	6,164	6,011	5,847
Annual Cost Per Custody Prisoner	137,410	131,446	127,682
Total FTEs	3,984	4,067	4,147
Annual Cost Per FTE	119,306	114,125	109,116

The increase in total expenditures from Fiscal 2024 to Fiscal 2025 was 7.2% (See Section 6.) In contrast, the annual cost per prisoner increased by only 4.5% or $5,964, due to the increase in the MA Custody Population as measured on January 1, 2025. This increase in annual cost per prisoner in Fiscal 2025 compares to the 2.9% increase from Fiscal 2023 to Fiscal 2024.

The total number of prisoners in MA custody as of January 1, 2025 increased by 153 prisoners or 2.5% from Fiscal 2024 in keeping with the percentage increase in annual cost per prisoner. The annual cost per prisoner continued its seemingly inexorable upward trend going from $127,582 in Fiscal 2023 to $131,446 in Fiscal 2024 to $137,410 in Fiscal 2025, the highest annual cost per prisoner the Lifer's Group Inc. has reported since we began reporting on the DOC Expenditures and Staffing Levels in 2014.

Interestingly, the Annual Cost Per FTE [7] increased by $5,181 or 4.5% from Fiscal 2024 to Fiscal 2025, the same percentage increase as the Annual Cost Per Prisoner.

5. A Three Year Comparison of DOC Staffing Levels For FTEs

Category	Fiscal 2025 #	Fiscal 2025 %	Fiscal 2024 #	Fiscal 2024 %	Fiscal 2023 #	Fiscal 2023 %
Security	2663	67	2743	67	2849	68
Other Staff	1321	33	1324	33	1298	32
Total FTEs	3984		4067		4147	
Total Prisoners	6164		6011		5847	
Ratio FTEs to Prisoners	1:1.5		1:1.5		1:1.4	
Ratio Security to Prisoners	1:2.3		1:1.5		1:2.1	
Ratio Other Staff to Prisoners	1:4.7		1:4.5		1:4.5	

6. Percentage Changes In Expenditures For Fiscal 2025 compared to Fiscal 2024, 2023, and 2022

Expenditure Category	Fiscal 2025 to 2024	Fiscal 2025 to 2023	Fiscal 2025 to 2022
Employee Exp.	2.4	5.0	1.1
Offender Health	21.1	29.8	36.6
Infrastructure	-66.6	-12.2	6.9
Utilities	8.6	8.6	21.6
Offender Food Costs	1.5	1.9	15.5
Other Expenses	16.6	57.6	52.8
Offender Program	13.3	87.8	16.8
Administrative Exp.	.9	1.3	12.1
Legis. Earmarks	-64.6	-25.6	-57.0
1/1 MA Custody Count	2.0	5.4	3.0
FTEs	-2.1	-3.9	- .1
Annual Cost Per Pris.	4.5	7.6	7.6
Total Expenses	7.2	12.9	12.8

7. Comparison of Expenditures and Staffing Levels Between Fiscal 2025 and Fiscal 2019

	Fiscal 2025	Fiscal 2019	% Change
Employee Exp.	475,316,578	440,433,611	7.9
Offender Health	247,039,956	169,041,475	52.1
Utilties	29,872,161	23,350,539	27.9
Offender Food	18,863,336	13,500,699	39.7
Infrastructure	21,775,970	12,872,382	69.2
Offender Programs	17,722,199	8,173,475	116.8
Other Expenses	20,436,138	6,675,550	206.1
Administrative Exp.	4,642,521	4,317,594	7.3
Legis. Earmarks	1,325,000	2,375,000	-44.2
Total Expenses	846,993,859	680,740,325	24.4
Prisoner Count	6164	8454	-27.1
FTEs	3984	4977	-20.0
Annual Cost Per Prisoner	137,410	80,523	70.6

8. Discussion

In Fiscal 2025, the DOC smashed through the $800 million threshold in Total Expenditures, coming in at $846,993,859, an increase of over $57 million or 7.2% from Fiscal 2024. As the Lifer's Group Inc. has asked in past reports and the question remains the single most important one - Have MA taxpayers received an adequate return on its investment? One indicator of a possible success would be a significant reduction in the recidivism rate, i.e., the rate at whcih those leaving the DOC return for a new crime. In August 2024,[8] the DOC published three year recidivism statistics based on releases in 2019. The recidivism rate was 26%. Yet, expenditures increased by 24% in those six years. What $850 million dollar corporation

8. Discussion (cont.)

could survive with a 26% failure rate?

According to the Sentencing Project, the number of prisoners in Massachusetts in 2023 decreased since 2018 by 46%. [9] Since 2023, the prison population in Massachusetts has increased by only 5.4%. Yet, total expenditures in Fiscal 2025 as compared to Fiscal 2023 increased by 13.5% and Offender Health Care costs increased by 29.6%. Only Employee Expenses kept pace with the population of prisoners percentage increase with an increase of 5.1%. The DOC needs to explain why and how total expenditures and offender health care costs have increased so dramatically given a mere 5.4% increase in the prisoner population. Why isn't the legislature demanding such answers as well?

The second highest expenses category in Fiscal 2025, as it has been for many years, was Offender Health Care Costs which comprised over 30% of the total DOC expenditures. Offender health Care Costs jumped by 37% over Fiscal 2022 and 52.1% when compared to 2019. In contrast, the MA custody population count increased only by 3% compared to Fiscal 2022 and decreased by 27% when compared to Fiscal 2019.

What is driving this explosion in Health Care Costs for prisoners? Inflation surely plays a part. But, more to the point, is the aging of the prisoner population couple with the reluctance by the DOC to grant medical paroles for those who meet the criteria laid out by the legislature, i.e., suffering from a terminal illness or a person is permanently incapacitated.

The problem is that the DOC, despite the findings of medical experts that a person is incapacitated within the definition of the

8. Discussion (cont.)

of the law, the DOC continues to deny medical paroles solely on the discretionary ground that a prisoner could still be a threat to society. While no one advocates the release of anyone who truly could be a threat to the welfare of society, it beggars belief that incarcerated individuals who are confined to wheelchairs, suffering from dementia, or any other proven debulitating condition could endanger society. Threats to whom and how? The net result is that the DOC willingly expends hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep incarcerating those who have demonstrated that they no longer need to be in prison. For instance, for Fiscal Year 2025, the DOC reported that the cost of incarcerating a prisoner at the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital was $595,909. [10]

Regarding elderly prisoners in Massachusetts, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, in 2021 the percentage of prisoners over age 55 in in Massachusetts' prisons was 21.9%, the second highest in the United States, topped only by New Hampshire at 22%. The average nationally for incarcerating those over 55 was 15.7%. [11]

Elderly prisoners, even those who are not debilitated, cost at least two to three times the medical costs for younger prisoners. [12] Is it not time for the legislature to enact legislation calling for parole hearings for those who are elderly and have served a significant length of years? The Lifer's Group Inc. stands solidly behind such legislation as well as bills allowing parole hearings for all incarcerated individuals and to address the present paucity of medical paroles. From 2021 - 2024, the DOC processed 168 medical parole applications. Only 44 were approved, a Approval Rate of 26%. [13]

Those incarcerated individuals who can prove to the Parole

8. Discussion (cont.)

Board that they can return to society safely, not commit any new crimes and are able to contribute to the welfare of society by living as productive citizens deserve a chance to prove their suitability for being paroled.

Another area the DOC needs to examine its practices is in security staffing. The Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2023 compared the ratios of security personnel to prisoners across the United States. Massachusets had the dubious distinction of coming in first with the lowest ratio of prisoners to each security staff persom, i.e., 1:1. That's correct one prisoner for each security staff person. The highest was Oklahoma at 1:5.87 or more than five times the ratio for Massachusetts. [14]

In addition, in terms of average annual salaries, Massachusetts came in at $77,260, second only to New Jersey at $81,900. The lowest was Mississippi at $37,000. [15] Fast forward to 2025 and the average annual pay for the lowest level correction officer in Massachusetts was $118,477, the next level - $121,730, and for the top level correction officer - $150,125. Captains averaged $160,622. [16]

Given the increase of over 53% in compensation in two years, one can only wonder why the DOC chronically claims there is a shortage of correction officers, notwithstanding the closures of MCI-Cedar Junction and MCI-Concord. Where did those correction officers go? Yet, the DOC claims that it is so short staffed that the DOC has dropped the minimum age for correction officers from 21 to age 19. [17]

It is important to compare the level of compensation for correction officers to that for other professions like EMTs or social

workers or counsellors. The National mediam compensation for correction officers was $53,300. For EMTs, it was $53,180 and for social workers or counsellors, it was $4,040. [18] All of those professions require substantially more education and training than does a correction officer, particularly one recruited right out of high school.

The DOC needs to reconsider its drive to hire 19 and 20 year olds as correction officers in light of the recent Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) Mattis decision. [19] The SJC ruled that "emerging adults," those between the ages of 18 and 21, could not be sentenced to life-without-parole since the brains of those in that age grouping have not fully developed, particulalry in the areas which control impulsivity and the consideration of the long-term consequences of their actions. The SJC found that emerging adults had: "1) a lack of impulse control in emotionally arousing situations; 2) an increased likelihood to engage in risk taking behaviors in pursuit of rewards; 3) increased susceptibility to peer influence which makes emerging adults more likely to engage in risky behavior..." [20]

Given the SJC's assessment of 19 and 20 year olds, it is difficult to understand why the DOC seems to think that placing an energing adult into a volitile environment such as Souza-Baranowski could possibly be productive, let alone safe. How can the DOC believe that hiring an emerging adult who could well lack sufficient impulse control and could have an increased likelihood to engage in risk taking behavior would not be a potential security threat or be able to deal effectively with older nad more mature prisoners?

The DOC, however, has assured those who may be dubious about hiring emerging adults as correction officers that no 19 or 20 year old would be issued a firearm This, of course, begs the question: If a 19 or 20 year old, who has presumably graduated from the Training Academy, can be placed in a correctional setting, then why can't that 19 or 20 year old be given access to firearms? The answer, of course, lies in the SJC's reasoning that 19 and 20 year olds "lack impulse control in emotionally arousing situations," [21] which the Massachusetts correctional officers union claims their members face on a daily basis. By restricting 19 and 20 year old correction officers from handling firearms, the DOC, by inference, is acknowledging the rationale put forth by the SJC and in doing so, the DOC is admitting that 19 and 20 year olds as correction officers lack the maturity to deal with emotionally charged circumstances. So, why even hire 19 and 20 year olds right out of high school in the first place? It is clear that, as stated earlier, the DOC needs to rethink this policy before its facilities become even more violent and drug infested.

END NOTES

1) Past Lifer's Group Inc. reports on the Expenditures and Staffing Levels of the DOC as well as other reports published by the group can be accessed at: realcostofprisons.org/writing.

2) Other Expenses include: clothing, facility furnishings, laundry and cleaning supplies, security equipment, ADA equipment, vehicles maintenance, IT and software licensing, Captel phone usage.

3) Offender Program Expenses do not include DOC Programming Staff expenditures which are included in Employee Expenses.

4) Legislative Earmarks are payments made by the DOC to towns where prisons are located.

End Notes (cont.)

5) Security Personnel include Correction Officers (2,588) and uniformed Captains (75).

6) CPOs are Correctional Program Officers who conduct classification hearings and assist prisoners in dealing with daily issues such as obtaining print-outs of their accounts, processing charge slips and other requisite forms.

7) The Annual Cost Per FTE was calculated by dividing the total of employee Expenses by the total number of FTEs for each year.

8) Massachusetts Department of Correction Three-Year Recidivism Rates: 2019 Release Cohort, August 2024 at 2.

9) America's Incarceration Crossroads; Reversing Progrss Amid Record -Low Crime Rates, The Sentencing Project, p.3.

10) Massachusetts Department of Correction Prison Population Trends Report, April 2025.

11) Trapped In Time - The Silent Crisis of Elderly Incarceration, Alysa Gordon, Michele Deitch and Alycia Welch, The American Civil Liberties Union Nat'l Prison Project, 2025 at 8, 18.

12) An End In Sight - A Confluence of Practical Financial and Beneficial Strategies For Massachusetts Life-Without-Parole. Dirk Greineder, Lifer's Group Inc., July 2025 at 1. See also: How to Cut the Prison Population, Save Money and Make Us Safer, German Lopez, New York Times, September 8, 2025.

13) Response by the DOC to a Public Records Request.

14) Help Wanted, Prison Legal News, September 2025 at 3.

15) Id.

16) Response by the DOC to a Public Records Request.

17) Massachusetts Department of Correction Lowers Age To Become A Correction Officer to 19. DOC Press Release, May 22, 2025.

18) Help Wanted, supra.

19) Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216 (2024)

20) Id at 225 - 229.

21) Id.