

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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PROPOSED

JOINT INTERIM COMMITTEE REPORT
TO THE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRD LEGISLATURE

S T U D Y O F T H E N E E D F O R A
T H I R D C O R R E C T I O N A L I N S T I T U T I O N

JANUARY 1967

STATE OF MAINE

IN SENATE June 3, 1966

ORDERED, the House concurring, that there be created an interim committee to consist of 2 Senators and 3 Representatives, appointed respectively by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, to study and report to the 103rd Legislature concerning a third institution in the State of Maine for the housing and treatment of all offenders committed to the State Prison or correctional state institutions; and be it further

ORDERED, that the members of the committee serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for their expenses incurred in the performance of their duties under this order; and be it further

ORDERED, that there is appropriated to the committee from the legislative appropriation the sum of \$1,000 to carry out the purposes of this order.

(S.P. #599 Order) _____

Pursuant to this order, the Committee reports as follows:

After carefully reviewing the reports by previous Legislative committees pertaining to the need by the State of Maine of a so-called Third Adult Correctional Institution or Reception and Treatment Center for adult male offenders, the present committee proceeded to update the facts and to further study and verify existing needs.

Previous information gathered by the 100th, 101st and 102nd Legislatures and set forth in their reports is not repeated here, but is recommended for study by each Legislator.

Several lengthy meetings were held and all information available was re-studied and visits to two modern treatment centers were inspected in order to obtain the viewpoints of administration and to see how such institutions were operated. Information obtained was invaluable and all data indicated that the State of Maine should, in the very near future, make definite plans for a reception and treatment institution.

In addition to previous facts presented it is believed that serious thought should be given to enlarging the scope of such a center to evaluate the potential of the proposed facilities to permit all males and females above the legal juvenile age who have been found guilty of crimes punishable by incarceration to be thoroughly evaluated before the Courts pass judgement upon them. All phases of mental, educational, vocational and physical examinations could be made and furnished the Courts in order to enable them to be fully informed of the facts pertaining to each person. It would then be proposed that the individual be sentenced to the Department of Mental Health and Corrections to be confined for a period of time in accord with the Statutes, in whichever institution would appear to be most fitting to the needs of the person.

Such an institution, if to examine both males and females, would have to be constructed specifically for the purposes intended.

The alternative and more conventional plan would be to construct a facility for the receiving and evaluation of all adult male offenders. If all convicted males were then sent to this center the professional staff would be given full opportunity to thoroughly evaluate, classify and to recommend the institution to which the person would be sent and the security and facilities deemed necessary.

It is expected that the majority of offenders would pass through this plant within 45 days, but that those who needed either mental, medical or physical therapy would be kept at the center for as long as necessary.

Such recommendations are duly made in the sincere belief that in order to sentence, incarcerate and treat offenders full information must first be obtained and then put to good use.

Many more people who serve sentences in various existing facilities could be rehabilitated and they should be given concentrated attention so that they can be safely returned to society as a contributor rather than to be a continued blight upon our State.

Those persons whom are deemed to not be in need of, or capable of, change should not be a contaminant to those who can be salvaged.

Although the present population of our male institutions is at a low point (believed to be because of high employment conditions and the war) it is firmly believed that if construction were to be started soon the need for more "bed space" would be evident before completion. It has been the recorded history that after a low wave in the criminal population trend there comes a high, which is higher than ever before.

Study of other correctional institutions reveals that Maine is lagging in the treatment of offenders and that it would not be to the best interest of this State to just enlarge existing institutions. Therefore, it is respectfully recommended that a Reception, Diagnostic and Treatment Center be immediately established in the State of Maine for the following purposes:

1. A facility available to the courts for complete evaluation of arrested persons pleading insanity as well as to thoroughly examine convicted felons for more adequate information to the courts after being found guilty and before sentencing.

2. To receive all adult male felon convicts and diagnose, classify, and keep or transfer to other institutions according to treatment required.

3. To provide housing and treatment of all adult male felon convicts committed to the State Prison or correctional state institutions, and rather than just add more space for confinement, to provide facilities to treat offenders according to their needs.

5. To segregate and treat certain adult felon convicts from the general population.

6. To provide services not hitherto available, but after great consideration to be found not only desirable but necessary for the best interests of the convict and the State of Maine.

In the past 100 years the population of Maine has only increased 50% while the prison populations have increased 400%. Progressive steps must be taken if we are to stem the tide of crime.

Although it is expected that accommodations for several hundred will be necessary eventually, it is felt that a facility suitable for housing 100 would be a sufficient start.

We of the Committee recommend that appropriate legislation be prepared to implement the aforesaid recommendations and that such legislation be presented for the 103rd Legislature.

Senator Charles W. Casey, Jr.
Senator Donia J. Girard, Sr., Vice Chairman
Representative Joseph J. Healy, Chairman
Representative Ronald McKinnon
Representative Paul J. Searles