The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety & Security

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Dear Friend:

Attached you will find a copy of the Patrick-Murray Administration's Correction Master Plan.

This plan is a blue print for the Patrick-Murray Administration's strategy to address prison overcrowding and the escalating costs of housing and caring for inmates, building on the Governor's comprehensive sentencing and supervision reform proposals. The plan includes recommendations for investing up to $550 million to upgrade existing facilities and add new beds over ten years.

Among the strategic investments proposed in the Master Plan are:

- Regional women centers and specialized regional sub-acute care facilities, which will eliminate redundancies in multiple existing facilities struggling to meet the specialized needs of small groupings of inmates;
- Community-based pre-release facilities to better prepare inmates for re-entry into their communities, providing a better chance for individual success and a lower rate of recidivism;
- New general custody beds in regional and/or multi-jurisdictional facilities to provide more flexibility and enable the construction of fewer buildings to address the needs of multiple jurisdictions more cost-effectively.

While some reports today claimed the Master Plan called for new, luxurious accommodations for aging prisoners, that is simply not true. What the Master Plan calls for is a smart use of new capital investments to make sure the facilities we build are cost-effective and able to prepare for reentry the 92% of prisoners who will one day leave prison.

Incarceration-related costs are placing strain on state budgets across the country. Massachusetts is no exception. On average, The Commonwealth spends approximately $47,000 per offender each year at the Department of Correction (DOC) and $38,000 per offender at county jails and houses of correction. Within the current system, small changes in the prison population add or save approximately $9,000 per year, per inmate. At a time when funding for most state services has gone down, state funding for DOC expenditures has

increased by more than $100 million in the past decade – close to a 30% increase. Even with this significant increase in funding, the Governor's Fiscal Year 2013 budget will propose closing one medium security facility in order to meet our bottom line.

As you know, the Legislature is currently considering significant changes to the state's sentencing laws. Provisions to strengthen our Habitual Offender statute would lengthen the terms for people already subject to long sentences under existing law. While this will add some cost to the system in the future, that number is manageable within the Master Plan.

The Legislature is also considering a change that would reduce the mandatory sentence for nonviolent drug offenders. This change is vital to the future of the corrections system. We can no longer afford to warehouse nonviolent drug offenders without taking more money that could be better spent in education, local aid and the social safety net. States across the country are making similar changes.

The Correction Master Plan assumes we will make these needed reforms, and also assumes we will have a more coordinated and effective system of supervision and reentry. That is why the Governor is renewing the effort to consolidate the Parole and Probation systems into one entity in his FY 2013 budget proposal. Without these reforms, we will need an additional 10,000 new beds, more than the 1,900 new beds we have proposed in our plan. We would need to more than double our planned capital investment to at least $1.3 billion and spend an additional $100 million a year in operating costs on top of our already record levels. And none of that would do anything to reduce recidivism or increase public safety.

This plan is the result of a process involving the Department of Correction, Sheriffs, representatives from the Executive Office of Administration and Finance and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. The Correction Master Plan is the starting point for the transition to a more integrated corrections system, not the end product. This plan is not intended to predict and provide all the answers to the challenges the corrections system will face in the next 10 years. Rather, it defines a vision and presents data in a framework to quantify needs and illustrate the impact of potential decisions.

The key to addressing the challenges to our system lies in improving our work in preparing inmates to reenter society. We cannot build our way out of this problem. We look forward to working with you to improve public safety and address the challenges confronting our prison system.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Elizabeth Heffernan
Secretary of Public Safety and Security