

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.242

Rep. Jones offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to urge the state of Michigan to accelerate
2 efforts to reduce mass incarceration.

3 Whereas, There are over 2 million people currently
4 incarcerated in prisons and jails in the United States, and over 6
5 million people living under court-ordered supervision.
6 Incarceration rates have increased 500 percent over the last 40
7 years, while crime rates in the United States have generally
8 decreased over that same period. As a result, the United States now
9 has the highest rate of incarceration of any country in the world;
10 and

11 Whereas, In Michigan, over 50,000 residents are confined or
12 detained in a state prison, federal prison, or local county jail.
13 In addition, at least 100,000 people are booked into local jails in

1 Michigan each year. Rates of imprisonment have increased
2 dramatically in the last 40 years, and Michigan's pre-trial
3 population has more than tripled since 1978; and

4 Whereas, Mass incarceration leads to devastating consequences
5 for those within the prison system and for society at large.

6 Overcrowding in detention facilities contributes to chronic health
7 care neglect, psychological trauma, and other human rights abuses
8 of prisoners. Individuals who have been incarcerated face numerous
9 disadvantages upon release or parole, particularly in housing and
10 employment. Furthermore, mass incarceration creates an
11 unsustainable financial burden on states as they struggle to
12 accommodate the rapidly expanding penal system; and

13 Whereas, Communities of color are disproportionately impacted
14 by mass incarceration. Black men are six times more likely to be
15 incarcerated than white men, and about 1 in every 12 Black men in
16 their thirties is in prison or jail on any given day. In Michigan,
17 white people are underrepresented in the prison population, while
18 Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaskan Native communities are
19 overrepresented. The inequities in detainment rates demonstrate how
20 mass incarceration is used to continually disenfranchise and
21 disempower Black communities; and

22 Whereas, There is little evidence to suggest that mass
23 incarceration improves public safety. While crime rates have
24 generally decreased, mass incarceration has not been shown to
25 contribute substantially to this decline. Lengthy prison sentences
26 are particularly ineffective, as recidivism rates decrease
27 significantly with age. In addition, incarceration does not address
28 any of the societal problems that lead to some types of crimes,
29 such as extreme poverty and drug addiction. The increase in state

1 expenditures on corrections to accommodate mass incarceration is
2 therefore not only expensive, but also ineffective and
3 counterproductive; and

4 Whereas, The overcrowding that results from mass incarceration
5 is exacerbating stressful conditions for corrections officers and
6 prison employees. The COVID-19 Pandemic has contributed to
7 widespread shortages of corrections officers in Michigan.
8 Corrections officers are overburdened by working conditions that
9 require them to supervise hundreds of prisoners in environments
10 that can be volatile and dangerous; and

11 Whereas, Every branch of government can play a role in helping
12 to reduce mass incarceration. Some strategies include implementing
13 diversion and deflection programs, changing police practices,
14 reducing the average length of stay, reforming sentencing and
15 parole, improving mental and physical health programming in prison,
16 funding reentry services, and reinvesting money back into the
17 community. Approaching the issue from multiple fronts is the most
18 effective way to address the many causes and contributors to mass
19 incarceration; now, therefore, be it

20 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the
21 state of Michigan to accelerate efforts to reduce mass
22 incarceration; and be it further

23 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
24 Governor, the Attorney General, the Director of the Michigan State
25 Police, the Director of the Michigan Department of Corrections, and
26 the Supreme Court Administrator.