



Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC)

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M-PAC Announces a Milo Forum on Corporate Prisons: “The Myth of Jobs in Private Prison Towns”

MILO – According to Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (M-PAC), building a for-profit prison is not economic development. To help understand the consequences of a potential Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) prison in Milo Maine, M-PAC is hosting a Community Forum on June 9th at Milo Town Hall. The Forum panel will present hard facts and respond to questions about the myth of jobs after CCA finds its way into a town. M-PAC describes the June 9th event as an opportunity to uncover the social and economic impacts on communities seeking this ineffective solution to unemployment.

Becca Sender, an M-PAC member from Waldo, provides more details of consistent problems found wherever towns have opened their doors to CCA: “Approximately 80 percent of privatized prison jobs go to people from away and if you’re over age 37, don’t bother to apply. Real estate values decline and the town infrastructure is heavily burdened. The town must play host to often-impooverished families of inmates. And always there are increases in chemical additions and domestic violence. If people really looked at what has happened in other rural towns they would ask their business leaders to stop such plans immediately.”

LD 1095, known to many as “the private prison bill,” was recently pushed forward to the next legislative session by the Criminal Justice Committee. M-PAC members will spend the interim months asking Maine citizens to review the facts and

oppose this bill. Meanwhile, Maine lobbyists, some politicians, and CCA – the largest prison corporation in the country – continue with discussions of building a for-profit prison in Milo, while also lobbying to send Maine’s incarcerated men and women to CCA’s out-of-state for-profit prisons.

In a *quid pro quo* agreement between CCA and Maine leaders and lobbyists backing CCA plans, Maine’s own prisoners would be shipped out of state to CCA’s prisons. Yet, according to Maine Department of Corrections, there is no need for extra prison beds. Since consolidation of prisons and jails, the DOC has approximately 400 extra beds available.

Those testifying against LD 1095 at a Hearing included families and children of Maine inmates who do not want their family members shipped to distant states. Rev. Stan Moody of Manchester, a former chaplain at Maine State Prison, summarized the problem for families: “Does Milo get some non-manufacturing jobs on the backs of hundreds of Maine families and loved ones of prisoners sent off to CCA prisons too far away for visits and too far away to know of human rights abuses?”

Judy Garvey of Blue Hill, Co-Director of M-PAC, says that “People throughout the state deeply want economic improvement in Milo. But there has to be a better plan, one that will sustain the economy without dragging Milo into irreversible decline. We wonder if Milo folks really want a prison, or if their business and political leaders are just too busy to search out ideas that would help the town?”

The potential for additional decline in Milo is reiterated by one of the Forum’s featured speakers, Frank Smith of Private Corrections Institute, who was stationed in Maine with the Coast Guard: “Other businesses won’t want to build within a mile of a CCA prison,” says Smith. “The work of Greg Hooks at Washington State University, Terry Besser at Iowa State University, and the Sentencing Project all conclusively have shown that private prisons damage rural economies.”

The Forum is free and all are welcome. Thursday, June 9th, 6 pm. Town Hall, Milo, Maine. Info: 342-3666 or www.maineprisoneradvocacy.org

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