



S.14 - An act relating to a report on criminal justice-related investments and trends
Follow Up - Community Justice Testimony
House Judiciary Committee
Jill Evans, Director, Essex Community Justice Center
March 23, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Based on comments and questions, the Community Justice Centers have two proposals for language that could align with the goals of S.14

1. Current and future Justice Reinvestment funding

We have heard through testimony this session outside of your committee that the savings from out-of-state beds will decrease in the coming years, as DOC will not continue to budget for the current number of out-of-state beds as they currently do. As a result, the savings will decrease. If the Justice Reinvestment Funding is solely based on these savings, as it is right now, the purposes for which Justice Reinvestment was created will not be realized.

Request: We would like to see a more defined process for Justice Reinvestment, with dedicated funds to support the community-based supports and services essential to reducing criminogenic need and overincarceration.

2. Community Justice Center funding

As noted in my testimony today, funding from the Department of Corrections is essentially ad hoc each year, with no guarantee that level funding will occur. Funding for Community Justice Centers must be stabilized in order to ensure continuity in programming, staffing, and restorative responses to crime, in line with criminal justice reforms enacted over the past several years.

Request: We would like to see a dedicated funding source (a line item in the budget) for Community Justice Centers, whether it is through the Department of Corrections or some other entity.

We are happy to work through the details of our requests with you in the coming weeks of this legislative session.