



From Incarceration to Community Care



[HoneyBeeHeather](#)

[H.445: An act relating to education and corrections infrastructure in the State](#)

[H.438: An act relating to a working group to develop a plan to eliminate incarceration](#)

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H.445: An act relating to education and corrections infrastructure in the State

lift the moratorium on state aid for school construction and place a 5-year ban on prison construction

FINDINGS

- (1) The social determinants of health affect public health and the social determinants of crime impact public safety, and these social determinants are intertwined.
- (2) Education is an important social determinant of health and crime.
- (3) Housing and living conditions are social determinants of health and crime.
- (4) Harsh social and physical environments in our schools lead to incarceration in our prisons.
- (5) Harsh social and physical environments in our prisons lead to recidivism, trauma, and harm.

INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to **invest in a physical and social environment that reduces harm, promotes recovery, and builds resilience** by stopping construction of prisons and by aiding construction of schools.

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this act is to support public health and safety by providing the benefits of education infrastructure and stopping the harm of prison infrastructure.

Dismantle the school to prison pipeline. Invest in education and make time to explore alternatives to incarceration!

H.438: An act relating to a working group to develop a plan to eliminate incarceration

creates working group to begin a just transition from incarceration to community care, through a pilot project that replaces women's facility with a continuum of housing for justice-involved women wrapped with community-based services

FINDINGS

- The **economic and social costs of incarceration are far greater than any benefits** due to the overall negative impact of carceral environments on the social determinants of health for justice involved individuals, correctional staff, families, and the community.
- Vermont can **reduce criminal behavior by investing in social determinants surrounding housing, education, workforce, health care, nutrition, and substance use and other mental health disorders** by increasing access to community-based services to justice-involved individuals rather than by incarcerating them in environments that cause greater social harm.
- Vermont can **reduce the social harm and trauma experienced by the Department of Corrections' workforce by creating new job opportunities and connecting correctional employees to existing careers providing community-based services.**
- Corrections reform in Norway and "Alternatives to Incarceration" in New York City have **reduced recidivism.**

H.438: An act relating to a working group to develop a plan to eliminate incarceration

creates working group to begin a just transition from incarceration to community care, through a pilot project that replaces women's facility with a continuum of housing for justice-involved women wrapped with community-based services

PURPOSE

The purpose of this act is to transform Vermont's criminal justice and correctional system by eliminating the need for State-funded and -operated correctional facilities through the **creation of a community-based system of care and rehabilitation that reduces recidivism and promotes recovery** for all individuals that includes:

- (1) accessible, equitable, and localized **services throughout the State**;
- (2) **secure and comprehensive housing** for those in recovery and those at risk of self-harm and harm to others;
- (3) **stronger treatment, educational, and workforce training options incorporated into localized and equitable residential programs**;
- (4) **pathways to economic security** by providing access to fair compensation opportunities, financial services, and capital for home ownership and small business development; and
- (5) **nurturing healthy relationships** to assist persons whose actions have contributed to individual or community harm with **repairing the harm caused by their actions** and **connecting with family and other community supports**.

Explore alternatives to incarceration and reinvest in community care!

Incorporate elements of [H.445](#) & [H.438](#) into any and all legislative action on **replacement of women's facility & Justice Reinvestment Initiative in Vermont:**

- **Integrate social determinants of health**, including at least housing, healthcare, nutrition/food security, education, economic opportunity, social opportunity, violence, and structural conflict,
- **Empower people with lived experience** by including justice-involved individuals, correctional staff, and advocates in Justice-Involved Women's Working Group and Justice Reinvestment Advisory Council,
- **Explore alternatives to incarceration** and reinvest in community-based services and housing,
- **Align the timeline for construction of any replacement women's facilities with the sunset and a moratorium**, securing time for an equitable process of deliberation that thoroughly explores alternatives to incarceration before building new infrastructure,
- **Reduce harm of incarceration by addressing violence**, whether self-directed, interpersonal, or perpetuated by agents of the state,
- Reduce harm of structural conflict and promote equity by **using a lens of transformative justice employing restorative justice principles and trauma-informed approaches in group and organizational processes.**

References for Findings of H.445 and H.438

(in order of recommended reading)

[Despite state support, Vermonters struggle to find housing after prison - VTDigger](#)

[Public Health and Safety: The Social Determinants of Health and Criminal Behavior](#)

[Advancing Public Health Interventions to Address the Harms of the Carceral System](#)

[Violence and Social Determinants of Health](#)

[Alternatives to Incarceration – NYC](#)

[Norway's Prisons Are Doing Something Right - NYTimes.com](#)

[I Did It Norway | The Marshall Project](#)

[California proposal eyes Norway as model for prison rehab - CalMatters](#)

[Justice Reinvestment Initiative in Vermont](#)

[2022 VERMONT PRISON CLIMATE SURVEY](#)

[Rutland jail, women's prison are among the costliest prisons in the country - VTDigger](#)

[The Economic Burden of Incarceration in the United States](#)