SENATE . . . . . No. 2944

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

SENATE, February 9, 2026.

The committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2114) of Joanne M. Comerford, Rebecca L. Rausch, Michael J. Barrett, Jason M. Lewis and other members of the General Court for legislation to establish a jail and prison construction moratorium, report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2944).

For the committee,
Nick Collins

FILED ON: 1/31/2026

SENATE . . . . . No. 2944

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act establishing a jail and prison construction moratorium.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 7C of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

Section 73. (a) For the purposes of this section, the term "correctional facility" shall have the same meaning as provided in section 1 of chapter 125.

(b) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a state agency or public agency shall not:

(i) study, plan, design, acquire, lease, search for sites, or construct new correctional facilities or detention centers;

(ii) expand the capacity of an existing correctional facility or detention center beyond its current design or rated capacity;

(iii) convert any part of an existing or dormant correctional facility or detention center for the purpose of detention or incarceration, including to change or expand the populations incarcerated in that facility or center;

(iv) renovate an existing or dormant correctional facility or detention center beyond performing routine maintenance and improvements limited only to ensuring compliance with federal and state law including building, health, and fire codes; installing plumbing fixtures such as toilets, showers, sinks, doors, or locks; improving food service or health services or medical service units; improving heating and cooling systems; removing restrictive housing units or other security infrastructure; improving spaces for programming and education; provided that such improvements shall not increase a facility's bed capacity and must result in improved living conditions for incarcerated people;

(v) repair an existing or dormant correctional facility or detention center for the purposes of expanding the facility or center, or increasing its bed capacity.

SECTION 2. (a) For purposes of this section, the term "county jail and regional lockup facility" shall mean a facility operated by a county sheriff that, as of the effective date of this act, is used for all of the following: (i) the detention of convicted offenders; (ii) as a jail, as that term is described in section 4 of chapter 126 of the General Laws; and (iii) as a regional lockup facility utilized by more than 1 municipal law enforcement agency for the detention of arrestees.

(b) Notwithstanding clause (iii) of subsection (b) of section 73 of chapter 7C of the General Laws, in the event that a county jail and regional lockup facility is closed due to the closure of a county jail, the county sheriff may transfer no more than 30 beds from the closed

facility to an existing county correctional facility, as that term is defined in section 1 of chapter 125 of the General Laws, within the same county.

SECTION 3. The department of corrections shall not own, lease, or utilize off street parking on the campus of Boston medical center in the South End section of Boston

SECTION 4. Section 73 of chapter 7C of the General Laws is hereby repealed.

SECTION 5. Section 2 of this act is hereby repealed.

SECTION 6. Sections 3 and 4 shall take effect 5 years after the effective date of this act.