

To the Editor,

As a former legislator, I know firsthand the difficult balancing act of crafting a state budget. However, there is one area where the state is failing its obligation: the funding of our county jails.

Years ago, a commitment was made to fund county jail operations at 20% of their overall costs. Unfortunately, that promise has been treated more like a suggestion than a requirement. By falling short of this mark, the legislature is effectively passing the buck to the people who can least afford it—local property taxpayers.

When the state underfunds these essential facilities, the financial burden doesn't disappear; it simply shifts to our cities and towns. This is part of a troubling, long-term pattern where the legislature passes bills and mandates policy but fails to provide the necessary resources to implement them. This practice of "legislating by mandate" forces local officials to hike property taxes just to keep the lights on and the doors locked at the county level.

Property taxes are already a heavy lift for many families and seniors on fixed incomes. It is inherently unfair to use their homes as a piggy bank to cover the state's unfulfilled promises.

The legislature must honor its 20% commitment. We need to stop the cycle of shifting state responsibilities onto the backs of local homeowners and ensure our justice system is funded fairly and sustainably.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Former Title/District]