

To the Editor,

As a local official, I am witnessing firsthand the immense strain our municipal budgets are under. We are at a breaking point where state-mandated policies are being funded almost entirely by local property taxpayers, and it is time for the Legislature to step up. The Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety recently took a critical step by [voting to include an \\$8 million increase](#) for county jail funding in the supplemental budget. This recommendation, which mirrors the goals of [LD 2232](#), is essential to restoring the state's commitment to funding 20% of jail operating costs. Currently, that share has dwindled to roughly [14-15%](#), leaving our communities to bridge a massive financial gap.

When the state fails to provide adequate funding for these facilities, the burden doesn't disappear; it shifts directly to our residents. In many service center communities, we are seeing [double-digit increases in county assessments](#), forcing us to make impossible choices between essential local services and rising property tax bills. This "legislating by mandate" is unsustainable and unfair to the homeowners we serve.

I urge the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee to honor the Criminal Justice Committee's recommendation and include this \$8 million in the final supplemental budget. It is a necessary investment to stabilize our justice system and, more importantly, to provide desperate relief to Maine's property taxpayers.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title/Town]