

**From:** [Andrea Melle](#)  
**To:** [Radovich, Candace](#)  
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LEGISLATIVE AUDIT DIV.

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Good morning.

I am submitting a comment for the Legislative Audit Committee meeting being held 4/23 & 4/24 and the part [Evaluating Education and Training Opportunities in Montana's Prisons](#) report. I find it deeply troubling that we are not providing more classes and programs to help our Montana inmates so that once they are released (which most will be) back into our communities, they actually have a shot at a positive future. That it takes years to get a class or job training if they can even get it at all is ridiculous. And that case managers are not helping inmates as they get closer to see the Parole Board when they need the help to hopefully get paroled is also crazy. A lot do not have people on the outside to help them prepare for parole and now that inmate mail is going to become all electronic on May 1, 2024, how are they even supposed to get paperwork sent to them as they now cannot have it in their possession? Inmates do not get to choose where they are placed so being put in Dawson County or Crossroads, you do not get classes/programs (if at all) like at MSP which is a disadvantage from the start. The fact that we continue to ignore the deficits that Core Civic provides at Crossroads is maddening! Core Civic continues to not follow their contract, Crossroads is a mess and now we do not even fine them when they are in noncompliance. In fact, we "reward" them with contract extensions and spend more tax dollars to put Montana inmates in their out of state facilities! Why? Our prison system is overcrowded and because we cannot provide enough of the necessary classes that are court ordered or provide training and job skills in a timely manner, the Parole Board is not releasing people who should be as what is happening to them is of no fault of them. Just think how much bed space would be freed up if we actually paroled people instead of always flopping them because of lack of classes or training? DOC needs to step up and fix this problem like yesterday instead of being "ok" with just keeping inmates locked up.

Thank you for your time in reading my comment and I hope this is just as concerning to you as it is to me and so many others.

Sincerely,  
Andrea Melle  
Havre, MT