



MOSES Position Statement for Resolution 556 on Dane County Jail and Criminal Justice System (March 7, 2015)

MOSES (Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity) appreciates the work done by many Supervisors on the County Board in creating and sponsoring Resolution 556. We commend the County Board for taking action to provide solutions to racial disparities and mental health challenges in our communities, while reducing unnecessary incarceration in the County jail. To make these actions as effective as possible, we support the MOSES Jail Task Force's requests that the County Board strengthen Resolution 556 in the following ways:

- 1. Create Crisis Intervention and Restoration Centers:** We agree that incarceration in the County jail, as well as placement in solitary confinement, often exacerbates the conditions of people with mental health needs, not to mention those with substance abuse issues or developmental disabilities. We must therefore ensure that these people, whether diagnosed or not, are moved out of the criminal justice system and the County jail, and into diversion systems. We call on the County Board to use capital funds to create community-based jail alternatives including one or more crisis intervention or restoration centers. Such community-based centers must be located geographically to provide equitable access to people with the greatest need for such services, especially people of color. The County should commit to increasing funding for mental health services, and also use BadgerCare, Medicaid, and all existing insurance available through the Affordable Care Act to expand County mental health and substance abuse treatment systems.
- 2. Expand Alternatives and Diversions:** Current diversion programs and alternatives to incarceration, including electronic monitoring (home detention), drug courts, and restorative courts, must be expanded without delay and to the fullest extent possible, while also increasing racially equitable access and participation. Alternatives and diversions save the County money and strengthen our communities by reducing the negative effects of incarceration. The charge of the Length of Stay Work Group should also include: how to expand existing alternatives and diversions and implement other alternatives not currently listed in Resolution 556, including home detention, abolishing cash bail, creating a revolving bail loan program, work release (Huber), and expediting release of those alleged to have violated the terms of state DOC community supervision.
- 3. Achieve Racial Equity:** The County Board is right to recognize that the persistence of racial disparities in the criminal justice system indicates that the system is not working fairly for all community members. Beyond "[prioritizing the] needs of communities of color," it is critical to have specific mechanisms for achieving racial equity. The County Board must set measurable and concrete goals for increasing racial equity in access to and participation in all services and programs discussed in Resolution 556, and must include achievement of racial equity in the missions of all three work groups. Resolution 556 should also fully incorporate the racial equity lens—by, for example, specifying "racial equity" rather than just "equity," and including specific racial equity goals in all sections of the resolution.
- 4. Address Life and Safety Concerns:** Immediate and pressing life and safety concerns in the City-County Building or other parts of the County jail must be addressed. To this end, the County Board

must obtain from the Sheriff accurate, up-to-date, and specific information about the immediate facilities needs that are both related to life and safety, and unable to be addressed by the existing facilities budget or resources. To ensure racial equity in how these issues are addressed, the Sheriff's Office should also provide the County Board and the public with racially disaggregated data about the people most at risk due to these life and safety issues. Broader jail space planning or renovations must wait until the implementation of the work groups' proposed policy changes have decreased the average daily number of people in the County jail.

5. **Strengthen the Work Groups:** We applaud the proposed creation of work groups to engage the public and formalize community input to transform the Dane County criminal justice system. Several changes would increase the effectiveness of the work groups. We ask that the County Board: (1) make a substantive commitment to act on the work group's policy recommendations; (2) solicit participation in the work groups from national experts and leaders, such as Leon Evans from San Antonio, who have proven experience in community transformation, reducing incarceration, and/or decreasing racial disparities; (3) charge the work groups to not only "[investigate] possibilities," but also to identify how specific policy changes can be implemented, in order to clarify the process by which Dane County can reduce both racial disparities and unnecessary incarceration; and (4) provide the work groups, including at their own request, with racially disaggregated data about categories of people relevant to the areas they are considering.
6. **Implement Better Data Systems:** We appreciate the County Board's recognition that accurate and up-to-date data about who is in the criminal justice system and why, are critical for achieving criminal justice system reform. The lack of a reliable data system should be addressed by redirecting capital funds to immediately build a Dane County Criminal Justice Dashboard that pulls data from existing systems. Information from this Dashboard, disaggregated by relevant factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, and mental health status, must be made available to the general public on a monthly basis *in order to ensure the accountability of the criminal justice system. This information must also be easily accessible to all parts of the criminal justice system and other coordinating agencies or organizations that provide social services.*
7. **Connect People to BadgerCare and FoodShare:** We support helping all people who qualify for BadgerCare, Affordable Care Act health insurance, FoodShare, and/or FoodShare Employment and Training to apply for and enroll in these programs, including those who are incarcerated in the County jail. In order to strengthen our communities, the County should make it a priority to facilitate helping people to apply for these programs, including providing trained staff and volunteers to offer and deliver direct resources for application and enrollment.
8. **Refocus Planning to Reduce Jail Space Needs:** Any jail space planning done by Mead and Hunt or another firm must take into account policy changes recommended by the work groups that would decrease the average daily number of people in the County jail. Any such short- or long-term planning should consider three or more scenarios of policy reforms that lead to different reductions in the jail population. Resolution 556 should also make clear that jail space planning is primarily an architectural concern, and that a jail space planning analysis firm, such as Mead and Hunt, should not have input into or control over the three work groups' policy recommendations. For the sake of transparency, any contract or agreement with a jail space planning firm must be made available for public review before being adopted by the County Board.

If you have questions, please contact the MOSES Jail Task Force at mosesjailtaskforce@googlegroups.com.

MOSES (Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity) is one of ten affiliates of WISDOM, a statewide interfaith community organization. WISDOM's 11x15 campaign seeks to reduce Wisconsin's prison population by half by the end of 2015. See <http://mosesmadison.org>, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mosesmadison/>, and <http://prayforjusticeinwi.org/>.

MOSES Abbreviated Position Points for Resolution 556 on Dane County Jail and Criminal Justice System

The MOSES Jail Task Force has the following three primary goals:

- 1) Stop all unnecessary incarceration
 - a) End racial disparities
 - b) Treatment instead of jail for people with mental illness, intellectual disabilities, or addictions
- 2) Improve jail conditions for those inside
- 3) Ensure that any facility changes promote goals 1 and 2

MOSES's full position statement of March 7, 2015, elaborates on these goals in an effort to strengthen Resolution 556, currently before the County Board. Below is a condensed version of the position points found in the full position statement.

1. **Create Crisis Intervention and Restoration Centers:** Create community-based jail alternatives including one or more crisis intervention or restoration centers, and locate the centers to provide equitable access, especially to people of color. Commit to increasing County funding for mental health services, and also use BadgerCare and other health insurance to expand such services.
2. **Expand Alternatives and Diversions:** Expand current diversion programs and alternatives to incarceration, including electronic monitoring (home detention), drug courts, and restorative courts, while also increasing racially equitable access and participation. Charge the Length of Stay Work Group with determining how to expand existing and other alternatives and diversions.
3. **Achieve Racial Equity:** Set measurable and concrete goals for increasing racial equity in access to and participation in all services and programs discussed in Resolution 556, and include achievement of racial equity in the missions of all three work groups. Include specific racial equity goals in all sections of Resolution 556.
4. **Address Life and Safety Concerns:** Obtain from the Sheriff specific information about the immediate facilities needs that are related to life and safety, as well as racially disaggregated data about the people most at risk due to these issues. Wait on making broader jail space planning decisions until the number of people in the County jail has decreased from other policy changes.
5. **Strengthen the Work Groups:** Commit the County Board to act on the work groups' recommendations. Solicit participation in the work groups from national experts who have proven experience in community transformation, reducing incarceration, and/or decreasing racial disparities. Charge the work groups to identify how specific policy changes can be implemented.
6. **Implement Better Data Systems:** Immediately build a Dane County Criminal Justice Dashboard that pulls data from existing systems. Make this information, disaggregated by relevant factors, available to the general public, as well as to all parts of the criminal justice system and other social service agencies.
7. **Connect People to BadgerCare and FoodShare:** Make it a County priority to facilitate helping people, including those incarcerated in the County jail, to apply for BadgerCare, Affordable Care Act health insurance, FoodShare, and/or FoodShare Employment and Training.
8. **Refocus Planning to Reduce Jail Space Needs:** Require Mead and Hunt (M&H) to consider three or more reform scenarios that lead to different reductions in the jail population. Make clear that M&H does not have sway over the three work groups. Make any contract with M&H available for public review before being adopted.

If you have questions, please contact the MOSES Jail Task Force at mosesjailtaskforce@googlegroups.com. Visit <http://groups.google.com/group/MOSESjailtaskforce> to subscribe to the MOSES Jail Task Force email list.

