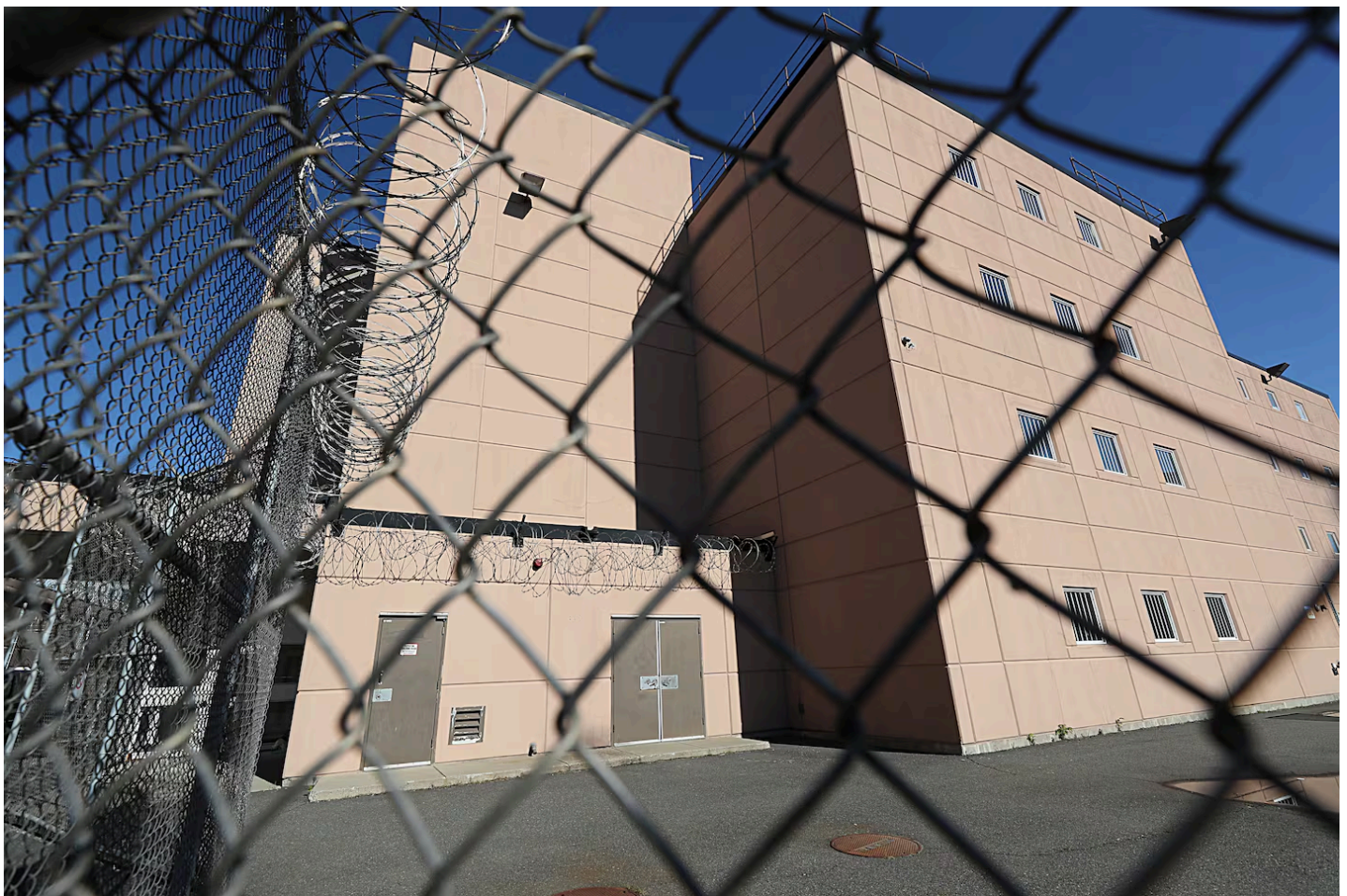


LETTERS

Governor needs to make welfare of those in jail her concern, too

Updated March 10, 2023, 2:30 a.m.



Building 8 at the Suffolk County House of Correction. SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

Re [“Healey boosts push for free prison calls, but with limits: 1,000-minute monthly cap; county jails and houses of correction would be exempt”](#) (Page A1, March 8): I am sure that Governor Maura Healey is aware that every taxpayer in Massachusetts collectively foots the bill of each of the [19 jails](#) in our state. She knows that while sheriffs get elected locally, all the money to pay for incarcerating people in houses of correction and jails comes directly from tax dollars as

delineated in her budget. According to the article, there are 6,029 people incarcerated in Massachusetts jails. Many are there only because they cannot afford bail.

In 2022, jails cost the state approximately \$685 million. The governor’s 2023 budget calls for even more spending in this area. Despite this steadily rising outlay of funds, it seems the new governor is abdicating full responsibility here and giving the sheriffs a pass. According to the article, she focused on funding phone calls only for people incarcerated in state prisons “because she thought it best to ‘deal with the entities within our control.’ ” If the governor is not [ultimately responsible for the operation of jails in Massachusetts](#) — and the welfare of the thousands of people confined in them — who is?

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The writer is founding director of the Real Cost of Prisons Project.

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