

Dear Committee to Ensure Constitutionally Adequate Contact with Counsel:

Thank you for your attention to this issue. I have been taking court-appointments in Penobscot County since 1994. I have not been made aware of confidentiality issues regarding attorney-client communications at PCJ. However, the jail phones' sound is inadequate about half the time. It's only a guess but, because the quality has gone down over time, I would assume that the phones have been abused by inmates not happy with the news they receive through the phone -- a kind of shoot-the-messenger mentality.

Communicating confidentially with in-custody clients at the Penobscot Judicial Center has been adequate.

I think very special attention should be given to the non-contact visit rooms at Somerset County Jail where I am often visiting my federal clients. These comments would apply to State clients as well. Communication is frustrating: difficult to hear and very echoey, especially when one raises one's voice to be heard. The visitor and inmate are separated by glass. The frame on the glass on the side has small holes through which almost no sound passes. Contact visits are still not permitted due to COVID, I believe. The staff is always nice and efficient with me but the non-contact communication is inadequate. I would highly suggest that someone investigate this issue at SCJ. Other facilities have glass partitions with holes drilled in them and the acoustics are much better.

Dave

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