

Tim Duffy
Portland, ME
LD 258

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Criminal Justice and Public Safety: my name is Tim Duffy and I live in Portland. I come before you today as someone whose family, like so many others, has been affected by the carceral system's use as the main treatment for substance use issues. I have a half-brother and two uncles who are no longer with us, all of whom spent time in prison as a result of substances. I am not blaming this system directly for them not being here but I do regularly wonder what could have been if we had a system that focuses on care and rehabilitation instead of punishment.

Time after time we put vast amounts of money into systems that take away freedom from people and turn them into numbers, while giving the bare minimum to non-punitive recovery systems. We take people who have made mistakes and remove them from their communities and families and place them in facilities where they are often isolated or in dangerous situations. The majority of these people will eventually be returned to their communities and families but are they returning better than before they went in? Are they even the same? The answer is different for all but in my experience, I know they weren't the same.

I ask today that you please consider taking the step to properly funding treatment options that heal instead of punish. The DOC and police continually have massive budgets and the problems communities face are only increasing. It is time to take a stand and look towards compassionate, evidence-based care so that we can begin to rebuild our communities.

Thank you for your time.