



April 19, 2023

L.D. 1603 – An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Committee to Ensure Constitutionally Adequate Contact with Counsel

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Steve Gorden. I am a Cumberland County commissioner and the Chairman of the County Corrections Professional Standards Council, and I am here on the Council's behalf.

Council members discussed this bill and voted to take the position of Neither For Nor Against LD 1603 – An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Committee to Ensure Constitutionally Adequate Contact with Counsel.

The County Corrections Professional Standards Council, henceforth referred to as the Council, was created in statute during the 130th legislative session. We began meeting in September of 2022 and we're a well-established group. The Council is comprised of two county commissioners, two sheriffs, the Maine Department of Corrections Commissioner, MDOC employee responsible for ensuring compliance in Maine jails, and the final member is a representative of the Maine Municipal Association.

The intent of the Council's position of NFNA is to inform members of this committee of our work and our ability to successfully convene meetings to include partners identified in the bill language. We agree that subject matter experts identified in this bill are the best equipped to ensure successful development of policies and procedures that pertain to adequate contact with counsel. Further, we appreciate the trust invested in the Council by the original committee members.

While we do not wish to weigh in on other aspects of this proposed legislation, we do hope the members of this committee are confident in the commitment of Council members and our ability to oversee this work, if passage of L.D. 1603 occurs.

Thank you for the opportunity to present today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Steve Gorden, Chairman
County Corrections Professional Standards Council