

Sarah Johnson  
Sanford  
LD 1626

Testimony of Sarah Johnson  
IN SUPPORT OF LD 1626

An Act to Standardize Requirements Between Boards of Visitors for County Jails and  
Department of Corrections Correctional Facilities

Presented by Senator Beebe-Center of Knox.  
Before the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, April 25, 2023

Senators Beebe-Center, Duson, LaFountain and Honorable Members of the Criminal  
Justice and Public Safety Committee,

My name is Sarah Johnson. I am a Software Support Specialist and I live in Sanford.  
I am a former volunteer instructor at the York County Jail (15 years) and the  
Women's Center at the Maine Correctional Center and Southern Maine Reentry  
Center (4 years). I recently worked in the education department at the Western New  
Mexico Correctional Facility in Grants, NM for 4 years.

I am writing to ask for your support of LD 1626.

BOV standardizes community access and review of the Maine Correctional System.  
This consistent oversight will help instill community confidence in the integrity of the  
correctional system. Public access to the boards will promote a better understanding  
of the prison and jail system and possibly increase community interest and  
involvement.

Organizations such as the American Bar Association and the Brennan Center for  
Justice have noted that public oversight and reporting on management and conditions  
are essential components to safe, healthy and successful prison and jail systems.  
Public boards help ensure transparency and accountability, as well as promote  
communication between residents, Corrections Officials and the public. This open  
and uniform structure can help form working relationships which would also improve  
the reentry process.

LD1626 requires standardized training for BOV members, and members must adhere  
to all rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the Department of Corrections.  
Uniform training and implementation of the Boards of Visitors will help to safeguard  
the integrity of Maine's prison and jail systems, as well as support and protect the  
staff, residents and citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration of LD1626.  
Sarah Johnson