

April Kerr
Farmington
LD 1626
April 25, 2023

Good Afternoon Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is April Kerr, I am a resident of Farmington and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1626.

The Board of Visitors (BOV) is an essential part of bringing awareness to those in charge of the many moving parts of a system that is needing attention. In some facilities, it is already in place and has been helpful to identify where there is a need for various things or a lack thereof. However, that is not the case in all of the county jails and correctional facilities. I believe that we should have cohesiveness amongst the systems that are working to do the same thing in their various locations. While it is important to work towards having things in place to not only help them do their job but to also advocate for those who are in these facilities. These human beings are living in a very controlled environment and in great need of many things but often find themselves not having their basic needs met, or having things happen that are impacting their mental health in a negative way. If there are ways to identify these issues and help get more done and in some cases by volunteers, then why not use this valuable resource? Having the consistency of the different "Board of Visitors" in place is crucial to this process. As I thought of what this bill was being presented to do I tried to think in my mind what is the problem. Help is needed, people are willing to do some of the preliminary steps to get things started, and yet people are not getting this in place to start the ball rolling. Why?

Even though I have never been detained for any length of time I still have an informed amount of knowledge due to the many conversations with individuals who have. They share about how they were affected so negatively in many cases by the way they were neglected and treated poorly, to say the least. Not being treated humanely and having no way to correct the issues, no way to have a voice, is not acceptable. If they have lost their voice then let someone speak on their behalf. If the people who are employed by our tax dollars need help getting things done then let's get this into place to help them.

While the work itself is one thing, identifying the issues is yet another. Having a light to shine into the darkness and shed light on things is just one of the many things that should be in place. There is no excuse for abuse and neglect, not even to individuals who have broken the law and we the people are expecting them to straighten out their ways to become law-abiding citizens. Let's help the people help those in need.

In closing, I urge you to pass LD1626.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
April L Kerr
Farmington