

Sarah Johnson
Sanford
LD 1516

Public Hearing May 2, 2023 1:00

Testimony of Sarah Johnson

IN SUPPORT OF LD 1516

An Act to Establish Alternative Sentencing for Primary Caregivers

Speaker Talbot Ross, Senator Bailey Representatives Kuhn Lee and Beckitt, and
Honorable Members of the Judiciary 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 in support of LD 1516 which would allow more primary caretakers to participate in community-based sentencing alternatives instead of incarceration. Keeping families together would benefit the entire Maine community. There is a long term traumatic cost to children of incarcerated parents, who studies show are much more likely to be incarcerated in the future.

Alternative sentencing programs also reduce recidivism by keeping family ties strong. This bill would also reduce future court costs in custody and other family related matters, as well as the cost of incarceration itself. Looking at the stressful challenges of the reentry process, we can also see the long term health benefits for the individual and family of alternative sentencing.

Alternative sentencing could include a number of community based programs such as drug rehabilitation and parenting classes. Along with the benefits of these programs, a stronger and more supportive community is built.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of LD 1516.

Sarah Johnson