

Larry Dansinger
Bangor
LD 1516

May 1, 2023

To members of the Judiciary Committee of the Maine Legislature:

I am writing in support of LD 1516, "An Act to Establish Alternative Sentencing for Primary Caregivers." This bill would, in some instances, allow for less suffering for innocent people, those who committed no wrong but are being punished, indirectly, for being a relative or family member of someone judged guilty of a crime.

I would hope all who hear and understand the term "collective punishment" would be revolted by the idea. It is practiced in some countries as a threat to the population. If a member of a family does something considered illegal, even without the knowledge of other family members, those other family members could also be punished in some way. More extreme examples in other countries are house demolitions or denial of human rights.

However, when a child or dependent adult in Maine loses a breadwinner and/or caregiver who is jailed, the dependent can be severely hurt, even without being directly punished themselves. They are indirectly punished, by losing care and adult supervision, income, housing, adequate food, or other basic needs. Some youth lose hope in living a respectable life, and they are more likely to enter the criminal punishment system themselves. This is expensive and damaging to community safety and security.

Such "alternative sentencing" would only apply in certain situations; not every defendant making such a motion would have it approved. However, even if it were allowed in only a minority of situations, it could shrink a new generation of young individuals entering the criminal punishment system.

Please vote "ought to pass" for LD 1516.

Sincerely,

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