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May 8, 2023

Senator Anne Carney, Chair
Representative Matt Moonen, Chair
Committee on Judiciary
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

*Re: L.D. 1535, An Act to Advance Justice in Sentencing by Amending the Laws
Governing the Maine Criminal Justice Sentencing Institute and Increasing Funding
for Meetings of the Institute*

Greetings, Senator Carney and Representative Moonen,

I am writing in support of LD 1535, *An Act to Advance Justice in Sentencing by Amending the Laws Governing the Maine Criminal Justice Sentencing Institute and Increasing Funding for Meetings of the Institute.*

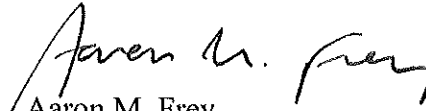
The Maine Criminal Justice Sentencing Institute was created in 1976. Under current law, the purpose of the Sentencing Institute is

to provide a continuing forum for the regular discussion of the most appropriate methods of sentencing convicted offenders and adjudicated juveniles by judges in the criminal justice system, prosecutors, law enforcement and correctional personnel, representatives of advisory and advocacy groups and such representatives of the defense bar as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court may invite.

4 M.R.S. § 454. As noted by the report from the Commission to Examine Reestablishing Parole, the Sentencing Institute met regularly at first, but has not met at all since 2005 due to lack of funding. The Parole Commission unanimously supported recommending to the Legislature that the Sentencing Institute be funded so that it can once again meet regularly. The Institute is an appropriate forum to explore the need for and ramifications of changes to Maine's sentencing laws, and I fully support its funding.

I note that LD 1535 includes details not addressed by the Parole Commission, including changes to the membership of the Sentencing Institute and that its meetings be open to the public. With respect to membership, I recommend the inclusion of prosecution-based Victim Witness Advocates. These individuals work daily with victims of crime and will offer invaluable perspectives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron M. Frey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aaron M. Frey
Attorney General