

Jan Collins
East Wilton
LD 2159

Greetings

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Jan Collins. I live in Wilton. I am assistant director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition. I'm here to testify in favor of L.D. 2159 An Act to Protect the Confidentiality of Attorney-Client E-mail Communications for Residents of Jails and Correctional Facilities.

MPAC's mission is to support Maine's incarcerated citizens, their families, and friends, in their struggle with Maine's criminal justice system. Our purpose is to reduce Maine's use of incarceration by creating a criminal justice system that is ethical, humane, and restorative in nature.

My thanks to Senator Carney for presenting this bill. It is much needed. As You know digital communication has become a regular part of prison and jail life for people who are incarcerated. The protection of privileged communication in this setting is essential.

I would like to ask the Senator to consider adding an additional venue, to the telephone and wire communications...written communication. Many attorneys still communicate essential information via letters and vice versa.

Letters from attorneys are well labelled with the lawyer or firms return address. These communications are protected as well, but are regularly opened in error by corrections officials. The opened letters are then given to the individual to whom they have been addressed, usually accompanied by an apology. However, there are no consequences for that breach.

I would ask that written communication be added to the types of communication under consideration and that the appropriate protocol be put in place for recording the action and possibly disqualifying individuals who may have viewed the content from court proceedings.

I urge you to support LD 2159 An Act to Protect the Confidentiality of Attorney-Client E-mail Communications for Residents of Jails and Correctional Facilities, with amendments.

Thank-you,
Jan

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