



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of
LD 2090, An Act to Modernize and Consolidate Certain Court Facilities
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Good afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am pleased to cosponsor **LD 2090, An Act to Modernize and Consolidate Certain Court Facilities**.

Currently, our local courts and staff members are struggling with the deficiencies of their current facilities, magnified by the separation of the Auburn and Lewiston courthouses.

LD 2090 proposes to combine the Androscoggin Superior Court and the Lewiston District Court into one building, which would be known as the Androscoggin Judicial Center. It also would provide bond funding for the construction and renovation of court facilities in Hancock and Somerset counties, providing increased space for staff and the public.

The Androscoggin Judicial Center would be located in the heart of Lewiston on Lisbon Street. The location of the existing Lewiston District Court has the highest level of foot traffic of any courthouse in the state. It is thus very important to our community that the new courthouse be located in or near the current District Court. Moving the court to the outskirts of town would jeopardize the easy access presently enjoyed by litigants and other court users.

Further, the Judicial Center would include modern courthouse features that are currently lacking, including eight attorney client conference rooms, a DA suite, prisoner holding on each floor and basement, attorney interview rooms for each jury courtroom, expanded entry screening and security, advanced technology systems and wifi, better public circulation, a lactation room, single user restrooms and secure parking for judges.

While we work to address the system for providing counsel to indigent criminal defendants, we must also modernize our court facilities to increase access to justice for Maine residents around the state.

Thank you for your time.