

LD179 - An Act to Amend the Maine Bail Code to Eliminate the Class E Crime of Violation of Condition of Release.

Good morning to the honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Stephen Borst and I live in Alfred, York County. I am writing today to provide testimony in **strong opposition** of LD 179 as it would cause more harm to Maine residents and their families.

I find this bill absolutely unnecessary, detrimental to the criminal justice system and something that will definitely have a negative impact on public safety here in the Great State of Maine. As a twenty-nine (29) year law enforcement veteran I have encountered hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals who have pending criminal cases and were free on bail with Conditions of Release so I feel qualified to speak on this topic. These conditions of release are the **only** mechanism, pre-conviction, designed to hold people somewhat accountable for their actions.

While I recognize that everyone makes mistakes, Conditions of Release essentially say, *"The system will allow you to enjoy your freedom until your case winds through the justice system but ONLY IF you abide by these rules."* It's a way for an individual to get a second chance to enjoy their freedom, under certain conditions. With the advent of "bail reform" the Conditions of Release have become a laughing point in public safety. I can totally understand if a defendant is granted a bail with conditions. What I, and my colleagues in public safety, cannot understand is why our current system allows for people to have dozens of criminal cases pending in the Court and still be allowed to roam the streets, committing new crimes. It is the absolute definition of "catch and release" policing and Mainers have had enough. I can say this after having multiple conversations with folks in the community I serve and they were, unanimously, appalled that Maine has folks on the street who have been *"arrested & released, arrested & released, arrested & released, arrested & released, arrested & released, arrested & released..."* I personally know of criminal defendants who have had over twenty (20) sets of bail conditions imposed by the Court and allowed to be on the streets, committing new crimes. This is totally unacceptable and this Bill, if passed, will only give those criminal defendants incentive to keep on doing what they're doing.

This is not bail reform but rather....bail elimination. Simply put, passing LD 179 tells the criminal that there are absolutely no consequence to breaking Maine's laws. And by eliminating the crime of Violation of Conditions of Release, the State of Maine would be inviting more harm to its residents and visitors alike. **I respectfully, and strenuously oppose, LD 179.**

Stephen Borst
Alfred
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