

MAINE STATE PRISON BRANCH OF THE



N.A.A.C.P



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Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee
State House Station 2
Augusta, Me 04333

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RE: LD 45 “An Act Allowing the Department of Corrections to Offset Some of the Costs of Technology Provided to Residents of Correctional Facilities”

The Prison Branch of the NAACP Oppose LD 45

Dear Criminal Justice Committee,

Within the past several weeks, the Maine Department of Corrections has cut paid job positions for inmates, who are housed in a Department of Corrections’ facility. And now, the Department is asking this Committee to pass a bill that seeks to charge inmates for technology service for use of **“but not limited to, computers, laptop computers and external storage devices that is provided to residents of correctional facilities in connection with educational or vocational programs, remote work or other purposes...”** LD 45 will cause more hardship for marginalized families, who are already struggling to help their incarcerated loved-ones pay court sanctions fines, restitutions, victim and witness fees, medical co-pay, etc. More importantly, LD 45 will deter and discourage inmates from rehabilitation apparatuses such as education and vocational training programs. The bill will steer inmates, who are on the path-to-success, off into a different direction. And inmates, who have yet to discover the path-to-success, may never search for it. The bill is adverse to the new Maine Model of Corrections, **“Making our Communities Safer by Reducing Harm through Supportive Intervention, Empowering Change, and Restoring Lives.”** LD 45 will not reduce the recidivism rate in the State. There is nothing in the bill that would “Reduce Harm”, “Support Intervention”, “Empowering Change”, and “Restoring Lives”.

LD 45 gives the Maine Department of Corrections a blank check to charge inmates whatever service fee the Department deems necessary, **“This bill allows the Commissioner of Corrections to establish a fee for the use of technology by residents of correctional facilities subject to exceptions as provided in the bill.”** LD 45 has no guard rails. In some regards, the bill has the potential to be financially harsher on marginalized families and their incarcerated love-ones than LD 18 “An Act to allow the Department of Corrections to Increase Health Care Fees and Use the Proceeds from Those Fees to Offset the Costs of Client Medical Care Support Workers.”

The Maine Department of Corrections is a non-profit organization. The primary goal of the Department is to manage and rehabilitate individuals in their custody, not to make a profit off grant funds they received for computers and computer laptops for inmates use.

Wherefore, LD 45 should not Pass.

MSP NAACP Executive Committee