

Written Testimony in Support of LD 244

An Act to Provide Safe, Short-term Housing to Indigent Individuals Recently Released from Correctional Facilities

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of LD 244, which would establish crucial transitional housing support for individuals recently released from correctional facilities. This bill addresses a critical gap in our reentry system that forces many formerly incarcerated individuals into homelessness at precisely the moment they most need stability to rebuild their lives.

My support for this legislation comes from direct experience with this issue through my brother Killian's journey. After being released from prison—where he served time related to substance use disorder—Killian found himself homeless. Without stable housing or support, he relapsed. His story could have ended there, like it does for so many others, but he was fortunate enough to access recovery housing. After over 18 months in this structured, supportive environment, he achieved remarkable success—working his way up to become a house manager and starting his own construction company.

However, Killian's story also illustrates the persistent barriers that formerly incarcerated individuals face. Even after 18 months of proven success in recovery housing—with steady employment and a demonstrated track record of responsibility—he struggled to find permanent housing because landlords consistently refused to rent to someone with a felony record. His experience demonstrates that we need both immediate transitional support, as proposed in this bill, and longer-term solutions to housing discrimination.

The 35 transitional housing units proposed in LD 244 would offer a lifeline to individuals at their most vulnerable point—the immediate period after release. This housing would provide the stability needed to:

- Maintain recovery from substance use disorder
- Secure and maintain employment
- Reconnect with family and community
- Access necessary medical care and social services
- Build a positive rental history

Furthermore, the bill's directive to Maine State Housing Authority to study long-term solutions points to efforts addressing the broader systemic barriers to housing that persist even after successful recovery.

My brother's success story demonstrates what's possible when we provide proper support during reentry. However, his success should not be an anomaly. It should be the norm, made possible through thoughtful policy solutions like LD 244. Every person leaving incarceration deserves the opportunity to rebuild their life on a stable foundation.

I urge you to support LD 244 and help create a system where stability and support—not homelessness and relapse—become the standard experience for Maine residents returning from incarceration.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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