

Testimony for the 132nd Session of the Maine Legislature
Joint Committee for Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Work Session of Public Hearing February 10, 2025

In favor of L.D. 244: An Act to Provide Safe, Short- term Housing to Indigent Individuals recently released from Correctional Facilities

Chairpersons Senator Anne Beebe- Center and Representative Tavis Hasenfus and Members of the Committee, my name is Suzanne Rudalevige living in Cape Elizabeth.

I support this bill for the following reasons:

- When someone is released from prison, many are likely to have few financial resources and some next to none. Even if they have worked while incarcerated, the rates of pay are outrageously low - (and will remain so unless we outlaw slave wages for prisoners (14th Amendment)
- Given this and the fact that housing is currently extremely scarce at the more affordable level. It is incumbent on the State to offer at least some transitional support to give a released prisoner a little time to search for housing if they are indigent and have nowhere to go.
- It is also wishful thinking that someone straight out of prison will be able to build a constructive life if they do not have a roof over their head. Housing is the crucial need before other stabilizing resources can take root.

I think that 2 months is rather minimal, and would suggest you consider making this a 6 months transition.

The study called for will shine a light on the long-term needs and provide data for future action. For instance, help for all resources needs to be available including help with finding accommodation, if such resources are not accessible through other agencies.

I realize that there are pressures to make this year's budget tighter, but sending people onto the streets from prison, is much more costly through recidivism and other issues than helping a released prisoner to find his or her feet in a dignified manner.

Please pass this bill.

Thank you.