

**Testimony in support of LD 1101
to the Committee on Judiciary**

March 19, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Johnson and I am a resident of Sanford.

I am writing in support of LD 1101, An Act to Address the Limited Availability of Counsel in Courts to Represent Indigent Parties in Matters Affecting Their Fundamental Rights

I thank the sponsors, Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn, for submitting this emergency bill.

We are in a state of emergency that we allowed to happen, and now must do the right thing under court order. This bill will fund the required attorneys and set up the necessary system so that our fellow citizens are not incarcerated for an indeterminate amount of time while we as a state violate their Sixth Amendment rights.

It is disappointing that we had to be sued into this. I wonder what the state spent defending itself over the 3 year lawsuit, and how many of our neighbors would be better off now had that money been spent on a Public Defender system. I hope that our values are better reflected by having a fully functional Public Defender system when the legislation expires on July 1, 2027.

Your time is valuable, so I will end by asking that you please support this bill, and so too the Sixth Amendment rights of every Mainer.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson
Sanford, Maine.