

3/27/25

Darlene George

Windham, ME 04062

Subject: Support for LD 822 – Eliminating Unnecessary Fines and Fees for Probation

Dear Senator Beebe-Center

I am writing to you today as an incarcerated woman who has firsthand experience with the challenges faced by individuals navigating the criminal legal system. I strongly urge you to support LD 822, which seeks to eliminate unnecessary fines and fees for probation. These financial burdens disproportionately impact incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, making successful reintegration into society even more difficult.

For many of us, probation is intended to be a pathway to rehabilitation and reintegration, but excessive fines and fees create an additional barrier to success. Many incarcerated women come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and upon release, they face numerous obstacles, including finding stable employment and housing. The added burden of probation fees can quickly turn into a cycle of debt, making it nearly impossible to regain stability and independence.

These financial obligations not only place undue stress on individuals but also affect our families and communities. Many of us are mothers, daughters, and caregivers who are striving to rebuild our lives and support our loved ones. Instead of promoting rehabilitation, these fines and fees function as a form of continued punishment, increasing the likelihood of probation violations and reincarceration simply due to an inability to pay. This is neither just nor rehabilitative.

Eliminating unnecessary fines and fees for probation would allow individuals to focus on meaningful rehabilitation, securing employment, and contributing positively to our communities. It aligns with the principles of fairness and justice while supporting successful reentry and reducing recidivism rates in Maine.

I urge you to support LD 822 and remove these unnecessary financial barriers. By doing so, you will help create a system that truly supports rehabilitation, rather than one that perpetuates hardship and failure.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Darlene George