



TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL KEBEDE, ESQ.
LD 822– Ought to Pass

An Act to End the Collection of Certain Probation Fees

Joint Standing Committee on
Criminal Justice and Public Safety

March 31, 2025

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Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, greetings. My name is Michael Kebede, and I am the policy director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Maine, a statewide organization committed to advancing and preserving civil liberties guaranteed by the Maine and U.S. Constitutions. On behalf of our members, I urge you to support LD 822.

Under current law, a person on probation in Maine can be charged two different monthly fees simply for being on probation: a “supervision fee” of \$10 to \$50, and an application fee *and* monthly fee of \$25 if the person seeks to leave Maine. 17-A M.R.S. §1807 (6), (8). This bill would eliminate those fees.

Poverty is one of the biggest obstacles to successfully re-entering one’s community after incarceration.¹ Difficulty obtaining housing, health care, and other crucial supports has made life for some people on probation extremely difficult – and in some cases, has been lethal.² By allowing people on probation to utilize more of their own resources, this bill will increase the likelihood of successful re-entry and give people a better chance to become supportive members of their communities and families.

We urge you to vote *ought to pass*.

¹ Evan Popp, ‘A failure of the system’: Over 700 people have died on probation in Maine since 2013, Maine Morning Star, March 4, 2024, available at <https://mainemorningstar.com/2024/03/04/a-failure-of-the-system-over-700-people-have-died-on-probation-in-maine-since-2013/>.

² *Id.*