

March 31, 2025

TO: Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

RE: Testimony in Support of LD 822- An Act to End the Collection of Certain Probation Fees

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Honorable Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I write this letter in support of LD 822 and urge you to vote to end the collection of these two specific types of probation fees in the state of Maine. This bill would help remove unfair barriers that disproportionately impact low-income individuals and parents.

The current system requires that people on probation pay general supervision fees and additional fees if they request a temporary leave from their jurisdiction. These fees place an additional burden on individuals who likely are already facing significant challenges in their re-entry such as securing housing, employment, and reunification with their families. These financial obligations create additional burden, and can perpetuate a cycle of debt that has been shown to lead to probation violations and increased recidivism.

In addition to further criminalizing poverty and placing unfair burdens on individuals who are trying to improve their futures, these fees also impact families and harm children. Requiring parents to pay a fee in order to visit their children is unjust. This is detrimental to reunification and also furthers the trauma and harm of parental separation that these children feel. Parental incarceration is a known ACE, which leads to many challenges in the long term. One of the key strategies for mitigating this harm is to ensure children and parents stay connected. These probation fees are in contrast to this recommended trauma-informed strategy for improving child wellbeing.

There are many other states that have found a way to stop collecting these types of fees. Maine should join them and find a more fair, reliable way to generate revenue than relying on individuals who are on probation to fill the gap.

I urge you to support LD 822 and help ensure that Maine's probation system remains focused on improving re-entry outcomes, and supporting families, not financial penalties.

Sincerely,



Jillian Foley

Westbrook, ME