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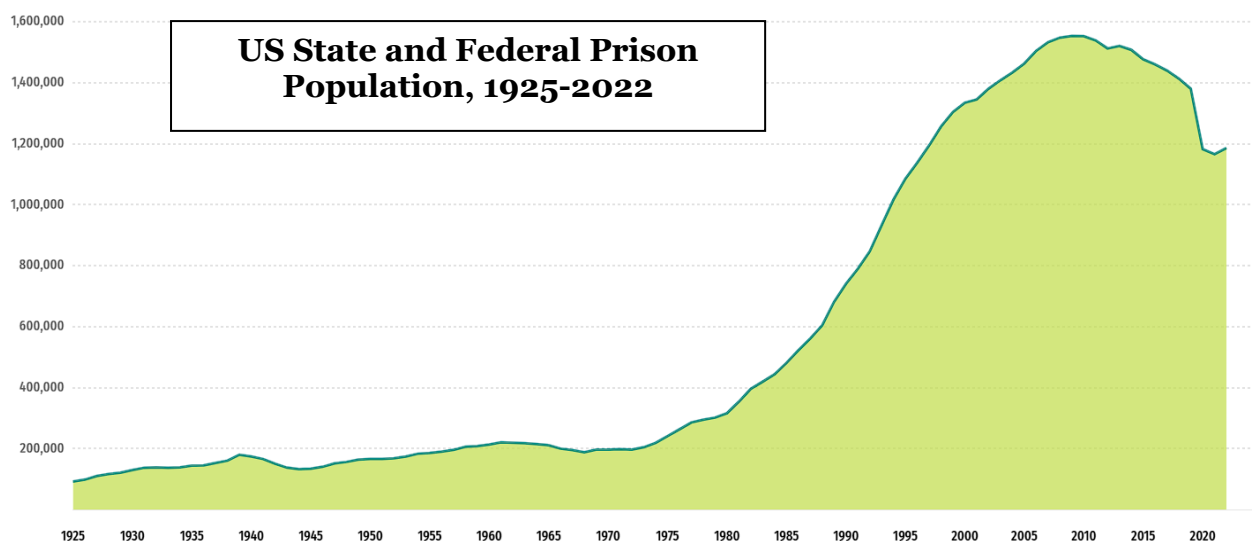
Testimony Against LD 1263 to the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

April 14, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Peter Lehman and I live in Thomaston. I am a formerly incarcerated citizen and a person in long-term recovery.* I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition and our commitment to public safety and the health of our communities. That is why we oppose this bill.

The purpose of this bill seems to be the mistaken belief that increasing penalties will somehow prevent overdoses and bodily injury. That belief that has been definitively proven wrong by alcohol prohibition and as shown in this graph of the US prison population over the past 100 years. We have increased our prison population over and over in the past 50 years and it has NOT SOLVED THE DRUG PROBLEM. It has not touched the problem at all!



And yet, I have sat in this very room and been told, over and over, that we could not afford to provide drug treatment in our jails and communities. That policy has COST LIVES. And it's WRONG. We cannot arrest our way out of our societal drug crisis.

* In the interest of honesty and disclosure, a personal background statement is available on request.

Mindlessly increasing penalties without providing treatment and positive options has already cost countless lives and WILL COST MORE LIVES if that's where we put our resources.

This is not a trivial matter.

Please defeat LD 1263.

Thank you for your attention.

I'll be happy to try to answer any questions.