

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



April 16, 2025

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

My name is Jan Collins, I am Assistant Director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC) an organization committed to ethical, positive, and humane changes in Maine's prison system. I am speaking in support of [L.D. 1022](#) An Act to Protect and Increase Access to Justice in Civil Legal Matters for Persons with Low Incomes sponsored by Senator Carney.

This bill matters for the “37% of US adults who reported in 2023 they would have trouble covering a \$400 emergency expense with cash, savings, or credit.”¹

It matters to the most vulnerable among us, those who are struggling with the high costs of housing and are on the brink of becoming unhoused. If you cannot afford housing, you are equally unable to pay for representation in the case of a threat of eviction.

It matters to those who have experienced domestic violence and are in need of a protection from abuse order and to elders in our community who have been subject to physical, emotional or financial abuse.

It matters to anyone who is wrongfully denied essential benefits.

Maine has historically underfunded civil legal aid. The \$1.3 million per year currently provided for civil legal aid services is a fraction of what is needed. Legal representation should be for everyone not just for those who have the resources to pay out of pocket.

Please give your unanimous support to [L.D. 1022](#) An Act to Protect and Increase Access to Justice in Civil Legal Matters for Persons with Low Incomes.

Thank-you,
Jan

Jan M. Collins
Assistant Director
Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition
PO Box 360, E. Wilton, ME 04234
207.578.8419

¹ [https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2024-economic-well-being-of-us-households-in-2023-expenses.htm#:~:text=figure%2021,or%20its%20equivalent%20\(b%20year\)&text=return%20to%20text-,note:%20among%20all%20adults,from%2011%20percent%20in%202021.](https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2024-economic-well-being-of-us-households-in-2023-expenses.htm#:~:text=figure%2021,or%20its%20equivalent%20(b%20year)&text=return%20to%20text-,note:%20among%20all%20adults,from%2011%20percent%20in%202021.)