

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



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Testimony in opposition to LD 1710 to the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

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

My name is Peter Lehman and I live in Thomaston. I am formerly incarcerated and a person in long-term recovery.* I am testifying in opposition to LD 1710 on behalf of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition because our goal is to promote restorative practices to increase public safety and the health of our communities.

This bill is a rehash of LD 1128 in the 130th without the positive suggestions about the need for special mental health intervention training for transport officers.

1. We do not agree that deadly force is justified to prevent escape no matter what the officer believes about their offense or intentions.

Maine does not allow capital punishment. **This proposal essentially creates a capital crime of attempting to escape.**

We don't believe it is acceptable to shoot people in the back. Especially on the basis of a tenuous string of "beliefs."

2. We also strongly object to the paragraph at the very end of the proposed §107-A, sub-§2 that begins: "For the purposes of this subsection." This paragraph essentially asserts that **any belief that the officer believes is reasonable** is, in fact and in law, reasonable. This sort of blanket immunity and undercutting of even reasonable person standards is not acceptable and should be removed.

We urge you to unanimously defeat LD 1710.

I will be happy to try to answer any questions.

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