

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



April 28, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety 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 here in opposition to [LD 1684](#) An Act to Exclude from Eligibility for a Community Confinement Monitoring Program a Person Serving a Sentence for Certain Domestic Violence Crimes.

LD 1684 would be a step backward for several reasons.

I am a survivor of Domestic Abuse. The first situation was as a child. When my dad drank, he was extremely violent. His substance abuse and violence shaped my life and my families life. Even to this day I am uncomfortable in situations where people are drinking heavily.

But despite my Dad's abuse, there was never a time when I did not want my Dad in my life. I always wanted him to stop drinking and stop hitting and kicking my mom. But I did not want to lose my Dad.

Although, this bill is well intentioned. The approach is faulty.

- By a margin of 2 to 1, victims prefer more investment in community supervision, such as probation and parole (and SCCP), to more investment in prisons and jails.
- By a 2 to 1 margin, victims prefer that the criminal justice system focus more on rehabilitating people who commit crimes than punishing them.
- 6 out of 10 victims prefer shorter prison sentences and more spending on prevention and rehabilitation to sentences that keep people in prison for as long as possible. 1

Supervised Community Confinement Programs give people an incentive for change and an incentive for participating in programming. Taking it away would make us all less safe.

Instead of lengthening sentences for people who are responsible for domestic violence, I would urge the committee to find a way to provide more programming, more opportunities for residents of jails to learn and practice socially appropriate behavior programs that would strengthen families and communities and make us all safer.

SCCP is a program that provides review. That review is stringent. As this committee has heard in testimony last week, less than 8 % of those who are eligible are approved. It also provides supervision, an important ingredient in what victim's request.

A second step that would improve outcomes for residents of jails and prisons as well as their families, would be to expand restorative justice programs for survivors and the people who caused them harm. People who do harm should be held accountable both for the harm caused by their actions and for the repair. Participation in restorative justice programs not only help people who have been harmed with the healing process, they help people who have caused harm become more aware of the effects of their actions, and it dramatically decreases recidivism.

We believe that the basis of release should be the accomplishment of rehabilitation and redemption. It should not be based on the original charges.

Lets invest in programs that work and avoid those that may create more harm.

Thank-you,
Jan

1WHAT ARE THE PERSPECTIVES OF VICTIMS ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY? Crime Survivors Speak: The First Ever Survey on Victim's Views on Safety and Justice.Alliance for Safety and Justice.

<https://asj.allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/survivor-survey/>