

Janet Drew
York
LD 1962

Testimony in support of the Ombuds bill, LD 1962 to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee January 8, 2026.

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

I'm Janet Drew, a retired nurse, and I ask you to support LD 1962 which seeks to improve safety accountability and outcomes through independent oversight.

An independent ombuds offers a reporting resource for any Mainer. Other state agencies all have independent oversight to improve outcomes. Maine's current accreditation process for DOC prisons is a sham, the service from contracted providers is often substandard, and random lockdowns stop programming.

National and State data show people inside are disproportionately poor, uninsured, sick, mentally ill, unhoused, single moms, people of color, and immigrants. COs and virtually no facility has individuals educationally prepared or adequately staffed to safely manage this mix... and tragic harms & unexplained deaths in custody occur. These situations and others affect mutual trust, and deserve focused follow-up. An independent ombuds can improve outcomes, and the wellbeing and safety of all at the prison.