

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



January 12, 2026

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 speaking in support of LD 1980 An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Stakeholder Group to Examine and Improve the Recruitment, Retention and Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers.

The health and wellness of first responders, including corrections officers, law enforcement, EMS and public safety dispatchers are essential to their ability to fulfill the responsibilities of serving the community.

As a member of the Franklin County Board of Visitors, retention and recruitment is a major concern and a priority area for us to address. It is a central area of our annual report. High turnover does not benefit anyone. Not the employer, the officers or the people they serve. Anything that we can do to increase longevity is a positive.

We are very proud of Franklin County's Sargent Close and his work around the state on first responder wellness. First responder positions are punctuated by high levels of stress. Centering mental health in the curriculum is essential to increasing longevity in these positions. but it is also essential to individual lives.

Corrections officers and first responders, have high levels of divorce suicide and shortened life spans. We must invest in the people who put their lives on the line as an indication that we value their work and their lives.

I believe that this bill applied to all first responders has a very reasonable price tag.

We must invest in the people who invest their lives in us.

Thank-you,

Jan

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