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Testimony of Representative Vicki Doudera presenting
**LD 692, An Act Regarding Eligibility for a Community Confinement Monitoring
Program in a Correctional Facility**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Good morning Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Vicki Doudera and I represent House District 41, which includes Camden and Rockport. I am here today to introduce **LD 692, An Act Regarding Eligibility for a Community Confinement Monitoring Program in a Correctional Facility.**

Community confinement monitoring programs are for eligible inmates at county jails and are at the discretion of the sheriff. While sexual abusers are not allowed to participate, there is no such restriction on domestic violence abusers. Nor is there anything in the law that mandates that victims of their crimes be informed that their abusers have been released.

Allow me to tell you how this bill came about and why it is important.

My constituent Patrisha McLean, a survivor of domestic violence and the founder of the grassroots advocacy group, Finding Our Voices, reached out to me this fall. She had been contacted by a local woman whose ex-boyfriend was in jail for beating her up and attempting to strangle her while he was on probation for attacking another woman. Through social media she learned her abuser was not behind bars as she had thought but was indeed out and about in the local area, having been granted the privilege to participate in a program called "community confinement monitoring." Needless to say, this woman who had nearly been killed at the hands of her abuser was now terrified, especially since she had cooperated with prosecutors to seek justice.

LD 692 would require a county jail administrator, before granting an application for the community confinement monitoring program for anyone who is incarcerated for a crime against a family or household member, to do the following:

- Review the applicant's criminal history to identify any pattern of behavior that may indicate the person poses a risk to the safety of others in the community if released early.
- Review the results of any available validated, evidence based risk assessment tool.
- Make a good faith effort to be in contact with the victim so they can share concerns or considerations related to a resident's early release and have those issues taken into account in the decision-making process.
- Provide notice to the district attorney's office that prosecuted the underlying case to allow the DA's office to provide any additional insight.

You will hear from several domestic violence survivors today that their abusers were not strangers to Maine's legal system and in fact had abused others prior to them. Often people who use domestic violence against their intimate partners are able to continue abusing their victims or move on to new ones even if they are sentenced to serve time. I believe that if our jails are going to release residents who have committed domestic violence crimes, they have a responsibility to victims and to the communities they serve to ensure they are making this critical decision after careful consideration of all the information available to them. And they have an obligation to make an effort to keep victims in the loop.

It is important to note that LD 692 does not eliminate eligibility for anyone to be considered for or granted early release into the community confinement monitoring program. Rather, it creates a framework for the decision-making process to ensure that community and victim safety are informing these decisions.

Later in testimony you will hear from Sheriff Joyce in support of LD 692. He will also share an amendment he has drafted regarding prisoner transport. It is a separate issue, however I am not opposed to adding it as an amendment to this bill for your committee to consider.

Thank you.

Representative Vicki Doudera