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**TESTIMONY OF
RANDALL A. LIBERTY, COMMISSIONER
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NFNA

LD 1514 An Act to Provide Safe, Short-term Housing to Individuals Recently Released from Correctional Facilities

**Before the
Criminal Justice Public Safety Committee, April 25, 2023**

Senator Beebe-Center and Representative Salisbury and other distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, I am Randall Liberty, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Corrections providing testimony neither for nor against LD 1514.

As this committee has heard, the MDOC operates a residence for adult males in Bangor. Leading the Way serves men who are exiting a correctional facility on either probation or Supervised Community Confinement.

During budget hearings this session there was talk and consideration by this committee to raise the amount requested by the MDOC to operate Leading the Way. There was also discussion by this committee to appropriate to the MDOC more funding for the purposes of the MDOC opening additional residences similar to Leading the Way in other parts of the state and potentially focused on women only.

If this committee is interested in passing the bill we'd like to work through, with the committee, a number of questions we have.

Some of our questions include:

- Is the Maine State Housing Authority on board with working in partnership with the DOC to administer a residence for correctional involved individuals?
- How is the term indigent being defined?
- Why limit the housing to only two months? Is that enough time for someone to find a job and save money that would be used for 1st and last month rent after leaving the new transitional housing?
- Why is it important for the residence to offer private toilets? Leading the Way offers shared bathrooms, shared kitchen, shared living room space. The only private area being the bedrooms.
- If MDOC is allocated a new fund in our budget for the purpose of creating this residence, what role would Maine State Housing Authority have?
- Is it better to do the study first, then after completion of the study, then enact some form of the proposed law.

We look forward to talking through these questions and working with all relevant stakeholders.

Thank You,

Randall A. Liberty, Commissioner
Maine Department of Corrections