



April 24, 2023

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

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Bruce Noddin, and I am the Executive Director of The Maine Prisoner Re-Entry Network or MPRN, a state-wide non-profit focused on providing peer support and coordinated community resources for hundreds of individuals returning to Maine communities from prison, jail, and treatment courts. I was also appointed to the State Workforce Board by Governor Mills and the Maine Recovery Council by Senator Jackson, in 2022.

I am writing in support of LD 1514 – "An Act to Provide Safe, Short-term Housing to Individuals Recently Released from Correctional Facilities."

We all know that available, affordable, and safe housing in Maine communities is at a crisis level. This has been the case since long before the onset of COVID-19. For MDOC Caseworkers, the MPRN Community Reintegration Specialists, and many other community agencies, finding housing is incredibly difficult. If we are fortunate enough to find a Recovery Residence with an opening or an apartment that's open, the next hurdle is how to pay for a bed or an apartment. LD 1514 seeks to remove this barrier and provides financial support for housing in the most critical period of 2-months after releasing from prison. We also strongly support the additional provision of engaging Maine State Housing Authority, in collaboration with the Department of Corrections, to study long-term solutions for transitional housing for recently released indigent clients of the Department of Corrections. Hopefully the study will be instructive and provide space for continued collaboration.

I hope the committee will consider recommending that LD 1514 ought to pass.

Thank you!

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