

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



May 9, 2023

Senator Beebe-Center, Rep Salisbury and honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee My name is Jan Collins and I am assistant director for Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition I am here today to speak in favor of **LD 1863 An Act to Facilitate the Provision of Medically Appropriate Levels of Care for Clients of Correctional Facilities**

MPAC's mission is to support Maine's incarcerated citizens, their families, and friends in their struggle with Maine's criminal justice system Our purpose is to reduce Maine's use of incarceration by creating a criminal justice system that is ethical, humane, and restorative in nature

I bring my personal experience to this bill For decades my husband worked as a long term care administrator In that capacity he was sometimes asked to take in a resident of the Maine Department of Corrections who was elderly, infirm or dying A social worker was sent from the long term care facility to the prison to evaluate the needs of the client and the client was released to community confinement at the facility

The MDOC sent staff to check on the client, as is true for all those housed under Supervised Community Confinement, and eventually each person took their last breath while housed at the nursing facility

Each of these men had committed violent crimes, but each was treated with the same tenderness and humanity as any other client As a result, one man was able to meet his daughter for the first time and get to know her and spend time with her before his death Another was able to reunite

with his wife and take his last breath in her arms. Others were able to make amends for past wrongs and come to terms with the hurt they had caused.

Eventually the case worker who had diligently worked to place these individuals in community care retired. Placements stopped.

It is my hope that this bill will make it easier for the Department of Corrections to place individuals who are elderly, infirm, or dying and no longer able to carry out the tasks of daily living in appropriate community settings.

It is difficult for the department to care for individuals with dementia, those who need chemotherapy, radiation or daily kidney dialysis. This medical care is specialized, and consumes precious money, time and staff.

Prisons are not designed to be nursing homes or long term care facilities, nor should they be expected to.

Please support LD 1863 An Act to Facilitate the Provision of Medically Appropriate Levels of Care for Clients of Correctional Facilities.

Sincerely,

Jan M. Collins, Wilton

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