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2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1440  
TTY: (207) 287-4469

LD 924

## **Kenneth W. Fredette**

50 Grandview Drive  
Newport, ME 04593  
Office: (207) 287-1440  
Cell: (207) 368-5562  
[Kenneth.Fredette@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Kenneth.Fredette@legislature.maine.gov)

March 17, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

My name is Kenneth Fredette and I represent District 33 which includes the towns of Dixmont, Etna, Newport, Plymouth and Corinna.

Thank you for listening to me today regarding the urgent need that we have in Newport to have a functioning District Court in Newport.

As you may know, the District Court was closed due to a "mold" issue and since that time, people have had to go to the Penobscot Judicial Center in Bangor for fillings, hearings etc.

This is a fundamental access to Justice issue, and I believe that due to this problem, there have been protection from abuse complaints that have not been filed with the court and many other un-intended consequences to the lack of a Court in Newport.

The purpose of this bill today is to direct the Judicial Branch to enter into a long term lease on a Courthouse and to open it as soon as possible to provide the people in Southern Penobscot County access to Justice.

Thank you for taking time on this matter today and with that I'll take any questions.