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TESTIMONY OF

SAM PRAWER, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS MAINE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

March 24, 2025

Neither for nor against:

LD 533, An Act to Allow Residents of the Department of Corrections to Opt In to Additional Restitution for Their Victims

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am Sam Praver, Director of Government Affairs at the Maine Department of Corrections (DOC) providing testimony today neither for nor against LD 533, An Act to Allow Residents of the Department of Corrections to Opt In to Additional Restitution for Their Victims.

The department's understanding is that this proposal is being brought forward with the intent of helping provide a pathway for residents of correctional facilities to provide an additional level of support for victims that goes above and beyond the baseline requirements of court ordered restitution. It's also our understanding that the underlying policy idea stems from the desire of at least one resident in our system who wants to provide this added level of support. We at Maine Department of Corrections think it is truly encouraging to see residents in our system taking such a forward-thinking approach to supporting victims, giving back to the community, and making reparations for their crimes. The proposal before you today would add to the variety of ways DOC residents are already pursuing those goals.

However, the department is unsure how many residents are interested in such a process and how much this process will actually be utilized, and for that reason we remain neither for nor against LD 533. While the department ultimately takes no position, it is worth noting that our team did work closely with the bill sponsor to ensure that the statutory process outlined in this proposal provides adequate protection to victims and avoids unintended consequences identified by our team. At this time, we aren't aware of any unaddressed concerns from a legal or victim services perspective. The version of this bill that's being presented to the committee today represents what we believe is a workable framework for providing this opportunity, if it is in fact something the committee decides to support.

For the reasons stated above, the department respectfully presents this testimony neither for nor against this proposal.

This concludes my testimony.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sam Praver
Director of Government Affairs
Maine Department of Corrections