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Testimony of Lani Graham, MD, MPH

In Support of LD 533

An Act to Allow Residents of the Department of Corrections to Opt in to Additional Restitution for Their Victims

Presented by Representative Miliken

Before the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, March 24, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Lani Graham. I am here in support of LD 533 as a victim of violence and as a physician interested in healing.

I have twice been attacked violently. On one occasion I was held prisoner for over two hours. Neither of these attacks was in Maine and in neither case was the perpetrator found. However, I knew then what I wanted. As a victim I wanted to be considered an important part of the process. I wanted my concerns as to how the crimes would be addressed to be considered important. I hoped to be able to confront the perpetrators and to try to understand what motivated them. Perhaps not everyone would want that, but I wanted direct accountability. If restitution was offered, I might have wanted that.

A friend of mine, who runs a business had several thousand dollars stolen by one of her employees. When she heard that the criminal had been caught and sent to prison, she was angry. She thought that it would be better if the individual worked off his debt to her. This option was never offered.

This bill offers a very simple approach to the much larger topic of restorative justice. It offers incarcerated people the opportunity to voluntarily provide some form of restitution to their victims. For some perpetrators this could be a very important part of the healing process. They reach out to become accountable to the victims.

It is very hard to see why this bill is not an excellent opportunity for all. I hope you will support it unanimously.

Thank you for your attention.