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Testimony of Rep. Dani O'Halloran introducing
**LD 930, An Act to Amend the Law Governing Items Identified as Prison
Contraband**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Dani O'Halloran, and I proudly represent District 20, which includes part of Brewer. Today, I am here to introduce **LD 930, An Act to Amend the Law Governing Items Identified as Prison Contraband**.

The intent of this bill is to bring a modern approach to the issue of prison contraband. The existing prison contraband statute, which has not been updated for quite some years, currently defines prison contraband as items that inmates, staff and vendors are not permitted to possess. This can include potentially dangerous items such as weapons, drugs or tools. However, it does not consider modern contraband such as electronic devices, like electronic phones and vape devices, which are increasingly finding their way into our correctional facilities. It is crucial that we update our laws to address these contemporary challenges.

As many of us already know, contraband items can be used as traded commodities in jails or prisons and can encourage behavior that puts inmates in immediate harm's way. Bartered items have been known to result in influenced behavior and inappropriate actions – such as assaults and requests for sexual favors. The potential harm caused by contraband is a pressing issue that requires immediate action.

I want to dig into why vape devices and electronic phones have been added to this amendment of the current statute. These days, it is not uncommon to see a vape device being used in conjunction with dangerous drugs, and with some incarcerated inmates on the pathway to recovery, it is vital that we help maintain an environment that supports sobriety. Electronic phones were also added into this measure because they can be used to contact victims and witnesses, plan escapes or to coordinate other dangerous activities. Again, this item was added to the contraband list to keep everyone safe, inmates and staff alike. It is important to note that items authorized by correctional facilities are exempt from this amendment, including iPads, laptops or staff-assigned cell phones for work duties.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this measure. If you have any questions, I invite you to direct them to the advocates testifying after me.