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# Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



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## **Testimony in support of LD 931 to the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**

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Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Peter Lehman and I live in Thomaston. I am a formerly incarcerated citizen and a person in long-term recovery.\* I am testifying in support of LD 931 on behalf of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition whose goal is to promote restorative practices in order to increase public safety and the health of our community.

We often say that the opposite of addiction is connection. We mean that people who are meaningfully connected to their community, to things that mean something to them, and to people and things that give meaning to their lives are less likely to seek escape into drugs and other addictions.

Those who are positively connected to their community are less likely to find connections to addictions and to criminal behavior.

That's what this bill promotes: meaningful connection to the community. Engaging, WITH others, in meaningful community activities, helping to build their community, having meaningful activity. **Everyone wins.**

And there is no reason why promoting this connection can't begin on day one of incarceration. Even before sentencing. While waiting. If you have to be in jail, why not use it?

One reward is time off their sentence, if they get one. The more important reward is the opportunity for contribution and connection.

This is a good bill. It's a positive bill—building community and connections.

Please endorse it.

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\* In the interest of honesty and disclosure, a personal background statement is available on request.