

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



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Testimony in opposition to LD 102 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 opposition to LD 102 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.

The Juvenile Code goes out of its way to **protect juveniles** from a lifetime of consequences of their behavior as children. We protect their privacy and that of their families and friends in hopes that they may grow into healthy and productive members of our communities.

In this bill, the Department of Corrections seeks to undo that. **In almost ANY case.**

Sections A and B address **escape**. Perhaps this seems serious but there are no other parameters. It doesn't matter whether the child has been adjudicated. The seriousness of their "crime" or other behavior doesn't matter. In other words, no matter why the child was in custody this bill says that we can blanket the airwaves and social media with their picture and descriptions and the fact that they are wanted by the police.

Section C only requires a **warrant** to blanket the airwaves and social media with their picture and descriptions and the fact that they are wanted by the police.

Remember that the "warrant" might be for almost anything—any Class A, B, C, or D crime. This also means that **the child has not been found guilty of anything** and has not been sentenced. In this case, they are not even accused of escape.

Yet, this bill would violate their privacy and that of their family and friends.

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

We all know how this works. The **publicity itself** convicts the child, and their family and friends, of delinquency or worse.

What do you imagine they have done that the police and others so desperately want to find them?

Not just skipping school, I'll bet.

No one waits for the whole story. It shames and humiliates the child and their family and friends. They all carry the stigma.

This is exactly why the Juvenile Code goes out of its way to protect juveniles.

We urge you to unanimously defeat LD 102.

I will be happy to try to answer any questions.