

I

March 31, 2025

Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

My name is Senator Pinny Beebe-Center. I represent Senate District 12, which includes all of Knox County except for the towns of Washington and Isle Au Haut. I am proud to introduce LD 822: An Act to End the Collection of Certain Probation Fees. This bill proposes to eliminate two fees of probation under the Maine Criminal Code, including supervision fees imposed for a person's term of probation and fees related to a person requesting temporary leave from a jurisdiction when the request is required.

Through my work in community-based reentry programs, I have seen firsthand the challenges individuals face when reintegrating into their communities. For our justice system to prioritize and support successful re-entry, we must work to reduce the financial penalties that are burdening individuals and their families. LD 822 is a necessary step toward reforming economic and criminal justice policies that are counterproductive and burdensome.

Studies have found that fines do not provide any sort of deterrent to crime or recidivism reduction<sup>1</sup>. This issue has been studied across the country and no one has found benefit to victims, taxpayers or the person under supervision. However, research has shown that fees and fines are found to be a driver of rising incarceration rates, especially with incarceration sentencing rates for women<sup>2</sup>.

Additionally, fees and fines unfairly harm working and low-income families, forcing parents to make impossible financial decisions. A 2023 national survey found that 17 million households with children likely experienced shortfalls in food, housing, healthcare, or other essentials because a parent was saddled with court-imposed debts<sup>3</sup>. Families should not have to choose between providing for their children and covering probation costs.

There may be some concern that eliminating these fees would reduce revenue for the Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC). However, LD 822 takes a measured approach, removing only two specific fees related to probation while leaving other court, jail, and prison fees intact. The balanced approach of this legislation allows us to assess its economic impact, while aligning with evidence-based practices.

LD 822 promotes rehabilitation and community stability over ineffective financial penalties that do not increase public safety. I urge my colleagues to support this reform and move toward a more fair and effective probation system in Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.

**Pinny Beebe-Center**

State Senator, District 12, *Representing Knox County*

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<sup>1</sup> The Impact of Criminal Financial Sanctions: A Multi-State Analysis of Survey and Administrative Data  
Ability to Pay, Collateral Consequences, Public Safety, Racial Disparities | Florida, Michigan, National, North Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin

<sup>2</sup> County Dependence on Monetary Sanctions: Implications for Women's Incarceration: Ability to Pay, Collateral Consequences, Conflicts of Interest, Courts as Revenue Centers, Policing for profit: Washington, 2022.

<sup>3</sup>Debt Sentence: How Fines And Fees Hurt Working Families

Ability to Pay, Collateral Consequences, Courts as Revenue Centers, Racial Disparities, Traffic Fines and Fees | National, May 24, 2023.