



Lori K. Gramlich

Assistant House Majority Leader

(207) 287-1430

Lori.Gramlich@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: Maine Relay 711

April 17, 2025

Testimony of Rep. Lori K. Gramlich in support of
**LD 740, An Act to Establish a Comprehensive Program to Divert
Youth from the Criminal Justice System and Address Their Needs**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Good afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. I am Lori Gramlich, and I have the privilege of representing the lovely seaside community of Old Orchard Beach as well as serving as the Assistant House Majority Leader. Thank you for the opportunity to speak as a cosponsor in support of ***LD 740, An Act to Establish a Comprehensive Program to Divert Youth from the Criminal Justice System and Address Their Needs.***

As some of you know, I am a Licensed Master Social Worker and have been practicing in the state of Maine for nearly 35 years. It is through this lens that I support LD 740, which would help to ensure children who are facing arrest or court involvement are provided with the most appropriate services for their specific needs.

We know that once youth become involved in the criminal justice system, the trajectory for their life choices becomes forever altered. Conversely, if youth are provided with prevention-based assessments to ensure that their mental health needs are being addressed, they have a much better chance of avoiding future involvement with the criminal justice system and instead achieving stable, fulfilling lives.

We also know that, compared with the general population, justice-involved youth experience high rates of Adverse Childhood Experiences, known as ACEs, which include abuse and other traumatizing events. These kids need help and support - not incarceration.

Prevention-based interventions are not only best for these young people, but also are a cost savings for the state, as every dollar spent in prevention measures saves approximately \$10 in treatment costs.

LD 740 is very similar to a proposal I pursued in the second session of the 131st Legislature, but unfortunately, that request was not approved by Legislative Council. Representative Lookner also introduced this measure during the 131st, and I was proud to cosponsor and support it. I continue to believe it is critically important for us, the Legislature, to act on this issue, and I hope members of the committee will support LD 740.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me.