

MAINE PRETRIAL SERVICES, INC.
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May 5, 2025

Senator Pinny Beebe-Center, Chair
Representative Tavis Hasenfus, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety
100 State House Station, Room 436
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 1817: An Act to Implement the Recommendation of the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services to Eliminate the Crime of Violation of Condition of Release

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Distinguished Members of the Criminal Justice-Public Safety Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Simoni. I write to you on behalf of Maine Pretrial Services, Inc. as **neither for nor against LD 1817**. Maine Pretrial Services, Inc. (MPS), is a private non-profit organization which provides pretrial release, community monitoring and support, and treatment recovery court case management services, with a presence in thirteen Maine counties.

MPS was an active participant in Maine's 2015 and 2019 Pretrial Justice Reform Task Force work, and like others who have testified today, is aware of and concerned about the impact of violations of conditions of release on Maine's case processing system. According to data published by the Maine Judicial Branch, violating condition of release (E) has been the most frequently charged offense since 2008, with 8,733 charges in 2024.

It is important to note that out of the 8,733 instances of VCR Class E, only 288 were related to cases involving domestic violence, with the majority of allegations being contact with a named victim, and a much smaller number being for possession of a weapon.

The idea to modernize an existing statute, Title 15, section 321, which contemplates criminal restraining orders in domestic violence and sexual assault crimes, is one that demands further consideration and is an idea that might hold an answer for the tension between reforming Maine's bail system and safeguarding protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. A revision of this statute can afford the same types of protections to victims, including no contact, no return to residence, school, or place of employment, no use or possession of firearms, and electronic monitoring if necessary.

A revision of Title 15, section 321 could offer a lasting solution to the perennial need to "carve out" exceptions for domestic violence and sexual assault cases and forge a stronger foundation that balances accountability for defendants and protection for victims.

Thank you for your consideration.



Elizabeth Simoni
Executive Director
Maine Pretrial Services, Inc.