



**Dan Sayre**

75 Summer Street

Kennebunk, ME 04043

Phone: (207) 613-6776

[Daniel.sayre@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Daniel.sayre@legislature.maine.gov)

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

May 5, 2025

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF:

### *LD 1844 An Act to Expand the State's Workforce by Supporting the Transition from Incarceration to Employment*

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, thank you for the opportunity to present LD 1844, *An Act to Expand the State's Workforce by Supporting the Transition from Incarceration to Employment*.

Those of you who served on this committee in the 131<sup>st</sup> legislature may recall that last term I presented a bill with a similar title but a very different approach. The goal remains the same: to ensure that people leave incarceration in the Maine Department of Corrections fully prepared to reenter the workforce and reintegrate into the community. The bill aims to fulfill the DOC's mission of "Making our communities safer by reducing harm through supportive intervention, empowering change, and restoring lives."

My previous bill had attempted to prescribe a set of resources to be supplied to people leaving incarceration, which I revised into a resolve for a study. A majority of this committee voted OTP on the study, but it was tabled in the House in preference to a much more comprehensive study proposal from then-Speaker, now-Senator Talbot Ross, which this committee unanimously voted OTP. Ultimately neither bill became law.

So, I return to you now with a different approach to the same objective. Instead of a mandate, this bill aims to give the Department of Corrections what the fields of engineering and construction call a "performance specification." That is, a statement of the result or functionality that must be achieved, rather than a prescription of specific methods or materials that must be used to achieve it. A picture of the destination rather than a prescription of the steps you must take to get there.

Instead of focusing on things a resident should be given *after* release, this bill focuses on how residents should be prepared for reentry *before* they are released. It directs the commissioner to establish and maintain a reentry services program made up of five essential components:

1. Health and Wellness
2. Financial Literacy and Planning
3. Employment Preparation
4. Community and Family Integration
5. Technology Training

These components are defined in terms of outcomes to be achieved, but the specifics are left to the Department to develop and deliver according to the needs of individual residents and the limits of available resources. The department already offers programming to some extent in many of these areas. This bill clarifies that each of these areas should be covered and specifies the essential outcomes to be achieved in each area.

The bill has been developed in consultation with both the department and with prisoner advocates and represents a synthesis of their perspectives.

Thank you for your consideration. I will be happy to answer any questions you wish to ask.