



February 18, 2026

Dear Chairs Carney and Kuhn and distinguished members of the Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing **neither for nor against** LD 2194: An Act to Clarify Responsibility for Compensation of Court-appointed Attorneys in Certain Proceedings. This bill would expand the definition of “indigent legal services” to include representation of parties involved in emancipation, extreme risk protection orders, children in child protective matters, involuntary commitments, and representation of nonparty witnesses entitled to counsel. Consequently, PDS would become the agency responsible for training, oversight, and payment of attorneys appointed and assigned in those cases.

PDS has historically administered these legal services and is in the best position to undertake training, oversight, and payment to attorneys providing these constitutionally- and/or statutorily-mandated services. PDS will require sufficient funding to make these payments in a timely manner. If sufficient funding was provided, PDS would be in support of 2194.

PDS has drafting suggestions for the proposed language. First, the new language under proposed section C-1 would fit better as a B-1 given the types of representation it specifies. Second, the language regarding non-party witnesses should be in its own section. Please see the attached proposed amended language.

I appreciate your consideration of this bill.

Thank You,

Frayla Tarpinian
Executive Director Maine Commission on Public Defense Services