

**Testimony in Support of LD 476**  
**Presented by Cushman Anthony**  
**On behalf of the Maine Council of Churches**  
**April 14, 2021**

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety: My name is Cushman Anthony. I am a Quaker and I live in Yarmouth.

I am writing this on behalf of the Maine Council of Churches, the leading organization of Protestant Christian churches in our state. We represent seven denominations statewide which include 437 churches with a total membership of more than 55,000 members. Our mission statement provides that we are working toward "...a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love."

We urge passage of LD 1476, that requires licensed assisted living and nursing facility levels of care for incarcerated persons..

Currently the Department of Corrections provides care that is below licensure standards to elderly prisoners whose deteriorating health requires special medical attention. That does not seem reasonable to us. Inmates should be given the same level of care as people in the general population, when they need assisted living or nursing home care as they get older. Doing otherwise is not justified by any moral or religious standard.

Regardless of what actions in their past led them to become inmates, when they age they should be given medical care appropriate to their condition. The Department has a legal as well as a moral obligation to treat them appropriately and compassionately. Our religious faith calls us to ask that the state do nothing less.

Please pass this law, and have the Department of Corrections either bring their facilities for these people up to standards, or send them to community placements specifically designed to meet their health needs.

Thank you.