

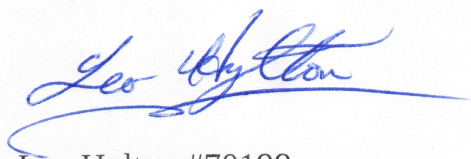
Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and Honorable members of the Criminal Justice Committee,

My name is Leo Hylton, I live in Maine State Prison, Warren, and I am writing to support LD 476 An Act to Provide Assisted Living and Long-term Nursing Home Care for Incarcerated Persons. In addition to being an incarcerated person myself, I am also a State-certified Personal Support Specialist and MSP Hospice Volunteer. Over the past seven years, I have been blessed to provide end-of-life comfort care to many men, including some very dear friends.

However, I have also witnessed great physical and existential suffering as men struggled to reckon with their dying in prison, unable to see and reconcile with family members who could not bring themselves to enter a prison. Sadly, I have also seen too many times when this suffering was exacerbated by feelings of living in segregation. Rather than dying in comfort and an environment of peace, they were subjected to facility lockdowns, count-times, and rotating staff who did not all understand that dying human beings deserve to be treated with compassion. Instead, they were treated with general apathy and in some cases outright disdain—as if their dying was an inconvenience to the orderly operation of the prison.

While there have been some caring compassionate nurses who have taken wonderful care of those who live and die in the infirmary, and the hospice team remains ever-ready to provide our peaceful presence there, I do not have words to convey how painful it is to hear a man wish he could die anywhere else but where he is, and to not be able to help. Incarcerated people need access to assisted living and nursing facility levels of care in licensed environments. This level of care is currently lacking. Please pass LD 476 into law. Thank you very much for hearing and considering my testimony. I pray you have heard my heart and will act accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,



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