

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



Peter M. Lehman, PhD
20 Lawrence Ave.
Thomaston, Maine 04861
(207) 542-1496
Peter@GrowInME.com

Testimony in opposition to LD 521 to the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety March 24, 2021

Senator Deschambault, Representatives Warren, and distinguished members of the Committees.

My name is Peter Lehman and I live in Thomaston. I am a formerly incarcerated citizen and a person in long-term recovery.* The goal of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition is to promote restorative practices to increase public safety and the health of our community. I am here today to praise and support the Maine Department of Corrections.

This bill is an insult to law enforcement and other criminal justice professionals.

Before I destroyed my life, I taught future and current criminal justice professionals. I continue to have deep respect for those women and men and their commitment to service, integrity and professionalism. As their teacher, I knew they were not perfect. And they certainly knew I wasn't either.

Nonetheless, they had, and still have, a commitment to doing it right to the best of their ability. That's why they were there in school: to learn how to do it as professionals. And that's what they learned at the academy: honor, integrity, and professionalism.

The current statute calls for the DOC to expound jail standards that are professional best practices.

Please notice that the County Commissioners haven't really questioned the standards as professional best practices. They only said that they want to do it on the cheap.

* In the interest of honesty and disclosure, a personal background statement is available on request.

I'm sorry, but integrity on the cheap is not integrity. Honor on the cheap is not honor. Professionalism on the cheap is not professionalism.

Of course, we always fall short of our own ideals and can't always do things as well as we would aspire to. But the answer is not to discard our aspirations and ideals. Not to hand them over to the money changers.

We urge you to vote Ought NOT to Pass.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.