

Joseph Jackson
Lisbon Falls

To: Committee Members for Criminal Justice

Date: 03/26/2021

Fm: Joseph Jackson:

MPAC Executive Director

Re: not in favor of LD 546

Greeting: Senator Dechambeau

Representative Warren

Honored Committee Members for Criminal Justice

My name is Joseph Jackson, and I'm the Director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC), MPAC is a statewide group formed in 2007. Our coalition members include, residents of correctional facilities, their families and friends, organizational colleagues, and individuals dedicated to social justice and humane treatment of residents in Correctional facilities.

I am also here as a member of the Juvenile Justice task force and take the position of ought not to pass on LD 546 because I feel this bill does not fully reflect the findings of that task force.

The first and foremost being the closing of Long Creek. I respect Mike Brennan in his belief that LD 546 will lead to the elimination of incarceration for youth at the Long Creek development center.

LD 546 does not call for the closure of Longcreek, nor does it count for the eight digit figure associated with its mission. As a member of the Juvenile Justice task force heard clearly that resources needed to be shifted to communities to provide the services that young people need.

The bill also fails to address who holds the jurisdiction of so-called troubled Youth in our State. As a member of the Juvenile Justice task force I heard clearly that in many states the jurisdiction belongs to another administrative body that is tasked with the health and wellbeing of our youth.

I heard clearly that many youth find themselves incarcerated because they don't have a place to live, or that Mental Health Services in our state failed them.

Lastly, this bill fails to outline Community involvement in the Continuum of Care for youth. Ending incarceration for youth involves more than reducing the number of young people confined. It involves a commitment to provide youth the resources and support they need to heal and grow.

Let's face it, youth justice reform is racial justice reform, we must look at the racial justice impact of any legislation, and when we find them incorporate strategies that reduce the disproportionate burden on minority groups, particularly on youth of color.

Thank you for your Time and Attention

Joseph N. Jackson : Director

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“Do the best you can until you know better, then when you know better, do better” Maya Angelou