

Cait Vaughan  
Portland

Dear Members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee,

My name is Cait Vaughan and I am a resident of Portland writing to urge you to vote in favor of LD 1175, An Act to Prohibit Excessive Telephone, Video & Commissary Charges in Maine Jails & Prisons.

Several of my loved ones are currently incarcerated and many more have been incarcerated in Maine previously and/or have core family members and loved ones currently in a jail or prison in Maine. I have personally experienced and also witnessed the drain of energy and financial resources on people inside and their families and friends outside, as folks try to remain connected. People who are incarcerated are already experiencing a level of social isolation that I consider cruel, to also charge high rates for basic human communication and connection is inhumane and cruel. Humans need one another. We need to hear each other's voices. We need to be able to reach out when we are hurting or exciting about something, equally. If the past year of the pandemic has taught us anything, I would hope it is the mental and emotional toll that isolation takes on all human beings. Seeing children suffer because their families cannot afford to make regular calls is awful. Knowing my friends who are mothering multiple children in expensive 15 minute phone calls and the pain it causes them also harms me. This is not right. The folks inside Maine correctional facilities belong to us, they are our loved ones, and we need to remain robust contact, regardless of whatever laws have been broken. They are doing time--don't make it cruel. Don't add suffering where there is already so much. Please vote to pass LD 1175.

Thank you,  
Cait Vaughan