

Ridgely Fuller
Belfast
LD 696

Dear Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I am writing in support of LD 696, a bill to ban solitary confinement in Maine's correctional system. As a career social worker and a volunteer with Restorative Justice I have come into contact with many formerly incarcerated, principally men. Uniformly all of them have suffered a history of abuse, trauma and/ or addiction. It is unconscionable and useless to deal with these issues through solitary confinement which simply exacerbates underlying conditions. These are mental health issues and need to be addressed by services and support not through solitary confinement. Since solitary confinement is very expensive, eliminating its use for those in the specific categories outlined in the bill will free up money for needed mental health, and rehabilitative resources.

LD 696 is a good beginning as it defines solitary confinement to those receiving less than 3 human contacts in a 24 hour period, limits the number of days a person can be held in solitary confinement, limits its use to issues of safety and not punishment and requires rapid transition to a unit with the necessary rehabilitation services.

I urge you to pass LD 696

Respectfully submitted,
Ridgely Fuller
Belfast, ME