



2 February 2022

Dear Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety;

Thank you for the opportunity to support LD 696 as amended, "An Act to Restrict the Use of Solitary Confinement, Segregated Confinement and Residential Rehabilitation in Maine's Prisons and Jails."

Twelve years ago MDOC did an admirable job of changing its policies regarding solitary confinement, dramatically reducing the numbers of people who have been subject to the debilitating effects of long-term isolation, thereby becoming a model for the rest of the country to follow.

Now it is time to legislate those changes, because, sadly, conditions of solitary confinement persist. If we truly aim to build a department of corrections, where people are helped to rehabilitate, and not a place where "cruel and unusual punishment" is condoned, we must legislate clearly the difference between punishment and treatment, prohibiting the former and promoting the latter.

We at Restorative Justice Project Maine support the amended LD 696 because it abolishes social segregation as a punishment and requires all forced social segregation to have a therapeutic rationale, goals, and a stated end date.

This is an advance for Maine and for human rights nationwide.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Tim Hughes, Belfast
Member, Board Legislative Committee
Restorative Justice Project Maine

Restorative Justice Project

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Restorative Justice Project Maine
LD 696

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