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*27 Years of Full Practice Authority as Healthcare Providers for the People of Maine*

17 February 2022

Senator Susan Deschambault  
Representative Charlotte Warren  
Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety  
Room 209  
Cross State Office Building, Augusta, Maine 04330

Dear Chairman Deschambault, Chairman Warren and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today as a psychiatric nurse practitioner, co-owner of a licensed mental health and substance abuse agency and member of the Legislative Committee of the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association. I have spent my entire career providing treatment for, and advocacy for, individuals with mental illness.

I have reviewed LD696, *An Act to Prohibit Solitary Confinement in Maine's Corrections System*. As you know, solitary confinement is defined as the practice of leaving a person alone in a cell for more than 20 hours a day and this bill bans that practice. In addition, LD696 sets clear standards for who is placed in such confinement, how they are treated and places a priority on rapid transition to residential rehabilitation, and equally as important, provides a provision for staff training.

There has been copious psychiatric research that demonstrates the profoundly deleterious psychological, physical and social effects of solitary confinement on an individual's well being due to the sensory deprivation, idleness, lack of normal human interaction and predictably exacerbates underlying causes of difficult behavior as people deteriorate psychologically, physically, and socially. For an individual with an existing mental health condition, these effects are profoundly amplified.

LD 696 assures that people get the health assessments and rehabilitative supports that contribute to their stability, in a non-punitive and therapeutic manner. I respectfully request that you support this bill without reservation.

Sincerely yours,

Constance W. Jordan, MSN, ANP, PMHNP  
Member, Legislative Committee, Maine Nurse Practitioner Association  
President, Maine Nurse Practitioner Association