

Testimony for the 130th Session of the Maine Legislature before the Joint
Committee of Criminal Justice and Public Safety

In favor of LD 696: An Act to Prohibit Solitary Confinement in Maine's
Corrections System.

My Name is Suzanne Rudalevige and I live in Cape Elizabeth.

Rather than repeat the many reasons why Maine should prohibit the practice of solitary confinement in its prisons, I want to simply underline the comprehensive testimony submitted by the GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), MaineTrans.Net, and the ACLU of Maine.

I support the testimony they offer and do so as a member of the faith community. We are not on this earth to harm each other and solitary confinement is known to do harm when human beings are separated from others for continual periods of times.

Especial harm is done to persons who suffer from mental health instability; we know from research that this is true of a large percentage of those imprisoned - ever since we emptied our hospitals for the mentally ill onto the streets in the 70s, never fulfilling the promise to give them support in community settings.

I too am grateful that Maine has been a leader on reducing the use and abuse of solitary confinement. Now is the time legislate the progress Maine has made and to end all discretionary power to impose this punishment in the future.

Thank you.