



## MAINE ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

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Senator Pinny Beebe-Center, Chair  
Representative Suzanne Salisbury, Chair  
Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety  
100 State House Station, Room 436  
Augusta, ME 04333

### **RE: LD 1514: An Act to Provide Safe, Short-term Housing to Individuals Recently Released from Correctional Facilities**

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public:

MACDL presents this testimony in support of LD 1514.

If a client is released from prison without stable housing available, their safety, sobriety, and security are severely compromised. For far too many of our clients, lack of access to decent (or any) housing was one of the major drivers for the conduct that landed them in prison in the first place.

Again, housing people in the community—no matter the cost—is and always will be more cost effective than imprisoning them. When people are released back into the community with a “good luck” and “take care” and nothing more, we are all-but ensuring their swift return to incarceration.

Requiring the Department of Corrections to work with the Maine State Housing Authority is a strong proposal—as the housing authority has the expertise and knowledge necessary to implement this plan and get people housed as soon as possible. The DOC has the funding to support such a program.

As with so many of these humane proposals put forth, we all know better now—we know that warehousing human beings indefinitely and then releasing them into the same conditions that led to their imprisonment does not work.

We know that housing, food, treatment, medical care, education, employment, case management and more can help people out of desperation and into stable and safe living—which benefits us all. It is high time that we start investing in the services needed to make our communities’—including the formerly incarcerated—lives better.

Thank you for your consideration, for your attention to this matter, and for allowing me to share with you all today on this important issue.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tina Heather Nadeau, Esq.  
MACDL Executive Director