



**Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine**  
*The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers*

Malory Otteson Shaughnessy, Executive Director

Testimony in Support of LD 931

**An Act to Expand the State's Workforce by Supporting the  
Transition from Incarceration to Employment**

Sponsored by Representative Sayre

5.9.2023

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Good afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. I am Malory Shaughnessy, a Westbrook resident, and the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. The Alliance is the statewide association representing over 35 of Maine's safety net community-based mental health and substance use treatment providers. The Alliance advocates for the implementation of sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral health care system.

On behalf of the Alliance, I am here today to speak in support of LD 931, An Act to Expand the State's Workforce by Supporting the Transition from Incarceration to Employment." This bill is a critical step towards addressing the challenges faced by individuals who have been incarcerated and are struggling to reintegrate into the community. As we are all aware, we are facing a critical workforce shortage.

The transition from incarceration to employment is one of the biggest obstacles facing formerly incarcerated individuals. Without access to employment opportunities, these individuals often find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty, homelessness, and recidivism. By investing in the successful reentry of formerly incarcerated individuals into the workforce, we are not only helping to reduce recidivism and improve public safety, but we are also supporting economic growth and development. Studies have shown that providing employment opportunities to individuals with criminal records can boost the economy by billions of dollars each year.

Furthermore, this bill is not only beneficial for formerly incarcerated individuals but also for employers who are struggling to find qualified workers to fill their open positions. By expanding the pool of eligible workers, employers can tap into a new and diverse talent pool, helping to address the current labor shortage and bolster the state's economy.

I urge committee members to support this critical piece of legislation. By investing in the successful transition of formerly incarcerated individuals into the workforce, we can help to create a brighter future for all Maine residents. I am happy to answer any questions you have for me. Thank you.