

Jan Collins
Wilton

March 24, 2021

Senator Claxton, Rep Meyer and honorable members of the Health and Human Services committee. My names is Jan Collins and I am assistant director for Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition. I am here today to speak in support of LD 512 An Act To Provide Intensive Case Managers to Counties That Do Not Have County Jails or Regional Jails.

MPAC's mission is to support Maine's incarcerated citizens, their families, and friends in their struggle with Maine's criminal justice system. Our purpose is to reduce Maine's use of incarceration by creating a criminal justice system that is ethical, humane, and restorative in nature.

Many thanks to representative Dodge for brining this bill forward. LD 512 creates equity for the residents of Maine Counties who do not maintain a local jail. It creates the supports that are necessary to keep individuals with medical conditions out of jail or if unavoidable to help them reenter their community successfully with supports.

Since the early 1980's the percentage of people incarcerated in the United States has increased 700%, primarily because we have chosen to put people with medical conditions in jail or prison Instead of treating their condition. In Maine we deinstitutionalized people with mental health conditions without providing the necessary community supports and we started incarcerating people with substance use disorder.

Ask any sheriff in any county and they will tell you they are the social service provider of last resort. Steve Gordon Cumberland County commissioner, stated in a November Department of Corrections policy hearing that over 70% of inmates at Cumberland County Jail were prescribed psychotropic medications.

It is the role of the Intensive Case Manager to put in place services to stabilize health care while the person is in custody, insure their right to a speedy trial, and to connect them with providers in the community who can support them when they are released.

All of these steps honor the humanity of the people in custody and treat medical conditions with medical solutions enhancing the individuals success and healing the fabric of our communities.

Please support LD 512 An Act To Provide Intensive Case Managers to Counties That Do Not Have County Jails or Regional Jails

Thank-you for your consideration,
Jan Collins
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