

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



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 674](#) An Act To Support Early Intervention and Treatment of Psychotic Disorders.

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.

Our thanks to Senator Breen for bringing this bill forward. Although we cannot speak to the details of this bill, we support early intervention, wrap around supports and family involvement all core ingredients of LD 674.

Unfortunately in the decades since the consent decree, lack of mental health services and supports in the community have become synonymous with over incarceration and burgeoning jail and prison populations all to the detriment of individuals, families and communities.

The solutions include education, destigmatization, expanded services and supports, housing, and fair remuneration. The answers are not new. We know and have known how to care for people and families struggling with mental health. What has been missing is the political will and pursestrings that are necessary to make it happen. Members of this committee know that better than anyone.

Let this be the year that we make dreams come true for those who have been struggling with mental health, those who have felt alone, afraid, and unheard.

Thank-you,

Jan Collins

Wilton

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