



Restorative Justice Project
Maine

21 March 2021

Senator Ned Claxton, Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

RE: LD 512, An Act To Provide Intensive Case Managers to Counties That Do Not Have County Jails or Regional Jails

Dear Sen. Claxton, Rep. Meyer and members of the Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support of LD 512 which provides Intensive Case Managers to Maine counties without jails. The mission of the Restorative Justice Project Maine is to promote a justice that is community-based, repairs harm, and creates safety and wellbeing for all. We believe that crime is a serious matter that requires a strong community response. This bill supports that mission.

As you know, all counties in Maine with jails have a dedicated (and overburdened) Intensive Case Manager working on behalf of those with mental health or substance use diagnoses in that county. Increasingly, the Intensive Case Manager's work has moved outside of jails and into the community in an effort to divert those at risk of incarceration to a more appropriate treatment venue, before being arrested. Intensive Case Managers thus both save state dollars and promote justice in counties that have them, by providing appropriate health care to citizens for a disease, rather than incarceration and punishment for a crime.

But there are four counties in Maine, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford and Waldo, without jails and without HHS funding for their own Intensive Case Managers. Yet these counties confront the same population challenges as Maine's other twelve counties. Without an HHS-funded Intensive Case Manager they are operating at an unfair disadvantage.

We urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 512. It is a small but important step toward a criminal justice system that produces a better outcome for all our citizens.

Sincerely,

Tim Hughes
Restorative Justice Project Maine Board Legislative Committee Member

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