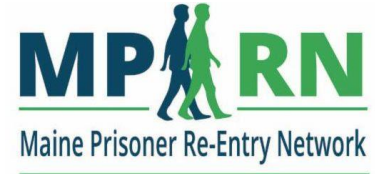


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April 4, 2023



Testimony in support of LD 2 to the Joint Committee on Housing

Hello Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and Members of the Joint Committee on Housing. My name is Bruce Noddin. and I am the Executive Director of The Maine Prisoner Re-Entry Network or MPRN, a state-wide non-profit focused on providing peer support and coordinated community resources for hundreds of individuals returning to Maine communities from prison, jail, and treatment courts. I was also appointed to the State Workforce Board by Governor Mills and the Maine Recovery Council by Senator Jackson, in 2022.

I am writing in support of LD 2. We do not need to inform the fine folks on this committee that the most pressing challenge facing nearly all Maine communities is a lack of available, safe, and affordable housing. The MPRN Team recognizes “Housing First” initiatives like LD 2 as an excellent step in the right direction. In our experience, the establishment of stable housing is a clear determinant of success for individuals who live with mental health challenges, are in recovery from substance use disorder, and/or releasing from incarceration. Conversely, individuals from these groups do not fair well without stable affordable housing, or at least accommodations to better support their needs in unhoused situations. Due to these challenges, many of these individuals end up back in jail and prison where disproportionate community resources are expended and incarceration only serves to exacerbate existing mental health and substance use conditions.

LD 2 supports multiple approaches to addressing the needs of the unhoused and supports people who are at risk of being unhoused. MPRN strongly supports LD 2 and hope the Joint Committee on Housing will vote unanimously to send LD 2 out as Ought To Pass.

Sincerely,

Bruce L. Noddin

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