

# Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



February 5, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jan Collins, I am Assistant Director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC) an organization committed to ethical, positive, and humane changes in Maine's prison system.

I am here in support of **LD 152 An Act to Amend the Freedom of Access Act to Require a Specific Time Frame for Agencies to Comply with Requests for Public Records** sponsored by Rep Libby.

In 2022 and 2023, staff at MPAC were attending a lot of funerals of friends who had reentered the community from prison. So much so that in June of 2023 we made a request for deaths of probationers from the DOC to see if what we were experiencing as a large number of deaths was borne out by the statistics. Here is what we received:

From adult community corrections

The number of individuals on probation in the last 10 years who have passed away while on probation is 658

2023 YTD May?	21
2022	85
2021	76
2020	68
2019	59
2018	63
2017	77

2016	67
2015	64
2014	54
5/22/13-12/31/13	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>658</b>

V/r

Jenna Heald  
Maine Department of Corrections

The DOC provided this data in a timely manner. We could see that deaths in community were steadily rising. But the data did not answer the question, why?

We asked that question of the DOC and they responded that they did not keep that information, we would need to contact the coroners office. After a delay the coroner's office said they needed the names. It took a few weeks longer but the DOC provided those as well.

It was weeks before the next response from the coroner's office letting us know that they could only provide aggregate data and not deaths attached to names. We responded that we would accept aggregate data. That was at the end of 2023. It is now 2025 and we still do not have the data from the coroner's office.

This is a matter of life and death...literally. In order to address the reasons why people are dying, we must know the cause of death. Meanwhile, more people have passed away, and still there are no answers.

This bill is essential. Lifesaving public policy decisions are wholly dependent on information government offices collect. We should be able to access it in a timely manner.

I urge your unanimous support of this bill.

Thank-you,  
Jan Collins  
*Assistant Director*

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