

**Testimony in opposition of LD 418
to the Judiciary Committee**

February 24, 2025

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

My name is Sarah Johnson and I am a resident of Sanford.

I am writing in opposition of LD 418, An Act to Remand Individuals with Pending State Probation Violations to the Department of Corrections Following Initial Proceedings.

This bill states that if a person can not make bail they should be incarcerated, potentially until ‘final disposition. A person who has been accused but by all rights is presumed innocent will lose employment and housing, and their family will suffer great trauma and loss as well. This harms the community, possibly an employer over the loss of an employee and strains already underfunded public services to help families. Even if charges are dismissed eventually due to lack of an attorney, the damage is already done.

Maine is already lacking public defenders which violate citizen’s sixth amendment rights every day. Beyond the economic, family, community and personal impact, this bill would violate citizen’s eighth amendment rights. People waiting for an attorney can’t negotiate bail. How can bail be ‘reasonable’ to a person who can not afford it? People in jail, especially without an attorney, cannot prepare for trial as they wait for their day in court in an overloaded system. How can we consider filling our jails with more of our neighbors who are still, once again, presumed innocent, based on their economic circumstances. This bill has no considerations for risk assessments or other determinations for release conditions. We should be moving to a more restorative and supportive system, not one that violates more rights and harms more families.

I hope you will oppose this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson
Sanford, Maine.