

Joseph Jackson  
Lisbon Falls  
LD 246

DATE: February 26, 2025

Dear Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee

My name is Joseph Jackson, and I'm the Executive Director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC), and a Co-Executive Director of Maine Inside Out (MIO).

I'm writing today as a representative of both organizations to express our support for LD 246. An Act to Establish the Option of Sentencing Alternatives for Primary Caregivers.

Both organizations are committed to working with system-impacted youth and adults as they navigate the systemic challenges imposed by their contact with the criminal legal system.

First and foremost our support for this bill is that it provides family stability. Primary caregivers, often parents, play a crucial role in the emotional and psychological well-being of children. Incarcerating these individuals can lead to familial disruption, negatively affecting children's development and stability. Alternatives can help maintain family bonds and support structures.

The second reason is that it reduces recidivism. Programs that focus on rehabilitation rather than incarceration can lead to lower recidivism rates. By providing support and resources, caregivers can address underlying issues, such as substance abuse or mental health challenges, which may have contributed to their offenses.

There is an economic impact for families whose primary caregiver is incarcerated. Incarceration can lead to significant financial strain on families. Alternatives can help mitigate this impact by allowing caregivers to maintain employment and provide for their families. This ultimately benefits the community and the economy.

There is also a social justice component inherent in this bill. Many primary caregivers come from marginalized backgrounds and face systemic inequities. Alternatives to traditional sentencing promote a more equitable legal system by recognizing the unique circumstances of caregivers and providing them with opportunities for rehabilitation rather than punishment.

Lastly, sentencing alternatives often involve community-based programs that encourage accountability and support reintegration. Alternative sentencing fosters a sense of belonging and responsibility. Primary caregivers are vital members of our communities and positive contributors to society.

Sentencing alternatives for primary caregivers aligns with values of family integrity, social justice, economic stability, and effective community safety. The passing of this bill signals that accountability doesn't necessarily mean punishment, and that ultimately serves both the individuals involved and society as a whole.

I urge you to support LD 246!

Thank You for your time and consideration

Sincerely yours,  
Joseph N Jackson  
MIO Co-Executive Director  
MPAC Executive Director