



MAINE ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

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February 21, 2025

Senator Anne Carney, Chair
Representative Amy Kuhn, Chair
Committee on Judiciary
100 State House Station, Room 438
Augusta, ME 04330

RE: LD 267 – An Act Regarding the Remote Appearance of Counsel in Pretrial Nontestimonial Criminal Matters

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

MACDL supports LD 267.

As everyone is aware, Maine is experiencing a crisis in its Constitutional obligation to provide counsel to people accused of committing a crime. Currently, there are approximately 6,500 more criminal cases pending than there were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This creates an undue burden on defendants, victims, witnesses, and judges. By ensuring that pretrial nontestimonial proceedings are permitted to be scheduled remotely, LD 267 will help reduce unnecessary case backlogs, decrease prolonged uncertainty for those involved in the criminal justice process, and promote more efficient case resolution.

By allowing attorneys to appear remotely, it will prevent delays caused by scheduling conflicts. Delays often mean extended pretrial incarceration for defendant, which exacerbates issues of overcrowding in Maine's jails and unfairly punishes individuals who have yet to be convicted. On the prosecution side, timely scheduling of pretrial matters helps ensure that cases are processed efficiently, allowing victims to receive timely justice and law enforcement to allocate resources effectively.

LD 267 represents a practical solution to a well-documented problem. By prioritizing efficient scheduling, LD 267 will reduce unnecessary delays, allowing the courts to operate more effectively without sacrificing fairness or due process.

I urge you and your colleagues to support LD 267. This common-sense reform will benefit all stakeholders in Maine's criminal justice system—defendants, victims, attorneys, judges, and the public at large.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Eric S. Thistle*
Eric S. Thistle, Esq.
MACDL Member