

Maeghan Maloney
District Attorney

Frayla Tarpinian
Deputy District Attorney



Kennebec County Courthouse
95 State Street, Augusta, ME 04330
(P) 207-623-1156 or 207-623-1157
(F) 207-622-5839

Somerset County Courthouse
41 Court Street, Skowhegan, ME 04976
(P) 207-474-2423 or 207-474-5517
(F) 207-474-7407

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
PROSECUTORIAL DISTRICT IV

February 28, 2021

Senator Breen, Representative Pierce, and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Maeghan Maloney, I am the District Attorney for Kennebec and Somerset Counties. I am here today in support of the Public Defender pilot project being considered for Kennebec County.

The United States Constitution, 6th Amendment, guarantees the right to counsel for those accused of criminal conduct. Our criminal justice system works when there are dedicated, passionate attorneys on both sides. In my personal experience, I am often impressed with the high quality of defense representation. But an independent study of Maine's system of indigent defense, found us to be lacking in consistent, high quality. We can and must do better. A pilot project is the perfect place to start. I am in support of the Kennebec County pilot project being proposed by Justin Andrus, the executive director of Maine's Commission on Indigent Legal Services. I hope you will give this the high priority it requires.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our great state,

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Support of a public defenders' office pilot program in Kennebec.