

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 931

H.P. 578

House of Representatives, March 2, 2023

An Act to Expand the State's Workforce by Supporting the Transition from Incarceration to Employment

Reference to the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative SAYRE of Kennebunk.
Cosponsored by Representative PRINGLE of Windham, Senator MOORE of Washington and
Representatives: BOYER of Poland, ROEDER of Bangor, SALISBURY of Westbrook,
SARGENT of York.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **CONCEPT DRAFT**

3 **SUMMARY**

4 This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

5 This bill proposes to charge the State Workforce Board with the responsibility of
6 preparing a plan to expand the State's current workforce development programming for
7 incarcerated persons and persons reentering the community after incarceration in
8 consultation with the Department of Corrections and the Department of Labor in calendar
9 year 2023. The responsibility for execution of this plan would rest with those departments
10 beginning January 1, 2024.

11 This bill also proposes adopting the specific recommendations of the Jail Navigator
12 Focus Group on Transition/Reentry, which include the following.

13 1. The Legislature would set standards for all jails to conduct mental health and
14 substance use assessments within 48 hours after booking for all residents, both pretrial and
15 sentenced, and provide needed substance use disorder treatment. Mental health and
16 substance use disorder treatment and recovery services would be offered and supported
17 throughout the resident's stay and planned for upon release.

18 2. The Legislature would increase support for the Department of Health and Human
19 Services to supply all jails with sufficient intensive case manager staffing with case loads
20 that reflect best practice ratios of 20 residents to one intensive case manager to prepare and
21 support all residents upon release. This support would help reduce the major barriers to
22 successful reintegration into the community such as housing, transportation, food security,
23 mentorship and health care services. Intensive case managers would continue to support
24 the individuals' reentry into the community until the individuals are fully established with
25 community-based case managers or providers.

26 3. The Legislature would support and fund access at every level of treatment, including
27 community-based services, for individuals with mental health challenges and substance use
28 disorder, including co-occurring disorders. The Legislature would also direct the
29 Department of Health and Human Services' office of MaineCare services to explore a
30 MaineCare supportive housing services benefit.

31 4. The Legislature would support and fund access for peer-to-peer mentorship
32 programs at each jail in the State.

33 5. The Legislature would support funding for intensive case managers, working with
34 community partners, to create programs for those leaving incarceration and returning to our
35 communities to supply those individuals with items of immediate need such as personal
36 hygiene items, fentanyl test strips, naloxone hydrochloride, a cellular telephone with
37 limited minutes and recovery and prevention literature, as well as established housing and
38 initial appointments for treatment. The provision of these goods and services would be
39 tracked for reporting purposes.

40 6. The Legislature would direct all jails to track assessments, treatment and reentry
41 services provided, preferably with one common management information system, to
42 determine which services are needed most often to inform investments with specific

1 metrics to be developed. In addition, this tracking should enable jails and other
2 stakeholders to ascertain which reentry services achieve the best outcomes for reducing
3 recidivism.

4 7. The Legislature would consider how to use the development of the new Certified
5 Community Behavioral Health Clinic model of care in this State as a major connector to
6 post-release community treatment.