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testify in opposition to this proposed budget. It doesn't reflect the increasing calls for judicial reform in every US state, county & town. Maine, too, has a responsibility to change from this system of disproportionately punishing mental illness, drug use, people of color and poverty. Worst, this toxic environment turns the small mistakes of juveniles into years of persistent trauma-induced disorders.

Our budget needs to reflect a priority: To provide support & opportunity to vulnerable families and communities, To recognize that draconian drug laws have not reduced overall drug use, To invest more in professional community responders, supports & services to better respond to social ills and 911 calls. Our budget needs to Demonstrate a Commitment to those priorities. Instead this plan continues it's bloated support for police and cages. This is all particularly disturbing during a life-threatening pandemic and is worst in confined spaces. The pandemic has extended time to court dates, yet courts still require bail besides! Last, reentry after any period of incarceration requires adjustments, is stressful and demands our help.

PLEASE! Prisons don't make us safer. Our system fails to help victims heal, but instead oppresses accused individuals, their innocent families, and communities (high prison #s, high recidivism, post-prison oppressions...)

I hope you will support ongoing criminal justice reform. Start by fixing this budget!