

TESTIMONY OF

DR. JOSEPH FITZPATRICK
COMMISSIONER

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
IN SUPPORT OF

LD 1447 “An Act to Authorize Increased Borrowing by the Maine Government Facilities Authority to Support the Maine Correctional Center in South Windham”

BEFORE THE
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

February 1, 2016
at 10 a.m.

Senator Rosen, Representative Fowle and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, I am Commissioner Dr. Joseph Fitzpatrick, for the Maine Department of Corrections. I am here today in support of LD 1447 “An Act to Authorize Increased Borrowing by the Maine Government Facilities Authority to Support the Maine Correctional Center in South Windham”.

This legislative document was submitted last year and due to its lateness at being printed, it was carried over into this session.

The current Maine Correctional Center has structures dating from the 1920’s. These buildings are inefficient and in desperate need of replacement. Other parts of the facility need renovation such as the Multi-Purpose Unit. There is currently inadequate programming space, treatment space, and the support services area such as the men’s dining hall is deplorable.

Space for female offenders is at a crisis point and we are currently beyond our female bed capacity. Although we keep them separated from the men, we are currently forced to house some of the women in the male portion of the facility. Under the new plan, a new women’s general population unit will be added as well as a women’s specialty unit for medical, mental health and close-custody beds.

Under the MCC expansion, additional substance abuse treatment beds will be available as well as additional sex offender treatment. An assisted living pod will also be built for our aging population which will be in close proximity to the medical department.

In consultation with the Governor’s office, the department is currently reconsidering some of the physical plant configurations in order to reduce the capital costs and still allow an increase in treatment opportunities.

The department looks forward to discussing these proposed changes with the committee during the work session of LD 1447.

I would be happy to try to address any questions you may have – either now or at work session.