

March 4, 2013

Distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on LD 573, which is not consistent with our intention to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders into our communities.

Studies have shown that the most effective way to deal with incarcerated people, as they accept responsibility and offer restitution, are to keep them engaged with the communities of which they and their families are a part.

Sentences are imposed proportionate to the offense, and denying someone the right to vote is a form of "*capital electoral punishment*" which serves no purpose in promoting rehabilitation.

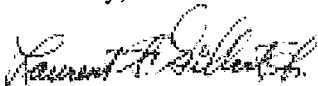
It is far better for all concerned to provide engagement in the civic process through voting than to further punish people who are already serving sentences and living with the consequences of their bad acts. Previous legislatures have reviewed and rejected similar laws, and I urge you to do the same.

As a former police officer/ police chief with the Lewiston Police Department who has come up through the ranks, I have made arrests and brought to justice many who were guilty of some most heinous crimes and yet I always treated them with dignity and respect as human beings.

My life's experience as the United States Marshal for the District of Maine, Associate Director of the Maine Community Policing Institute at the University of Maine at Augusta and subsequently as Mayor of the City of Lewiston has, through my experience, shown me that maintaining the dignity of the human being is of utmost importance for a person to accept responsibility for his or her actions. As such, it has led them towards some form of rehabilitation which should always be our goal in a civilized society.

We, as Americans, through our founding fathers, have developed a country based on Judeo/Christian principles. As such, we should leave certain things to our Almighty God before whom we will all stand for judgment. I strongly urge you to vote no on this proposed legislation and with full respect for its sponsors.

Sincerely,



Laurent F. Gilbert, Sr.