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**Maine Coalition to
End Domestic Violence**

May 3, 2013

Good morning, Senator Craven, Representative Farnsworth and members of the committee,

My name is Margo Batsie and I am here representing the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence offering information to inform decision making LD 1443 An Act To Make Convicted Drug Felons Ineligible for TANF Assistance.

We question the wisdom of making a lifetime prohibition for access to benefits based on a one-time, non-violent crime. Domestic violence victims do sometimes resort to drug use to dull the pain of abuse. On occasion, they are caught up in the drug trafficking of an abuser, arrested, convicted and spend time in jail. Sometimes this results in a change of life, enforced separation from the abuser and on release, a new safer life. We would not want their access to the financial supports to sustain that new life stopped, as proposed in this legislation.

Hope is based on the expectation of positive change. What one does early in life may have no bearing on the person. If a person has become drug free and no longer engaged in criminal activity, what gain does society have in refusing them benefits due to the rest of us? This punitive action benefits no one—certainly not the person trying to turn their life around.