

Dear CJPS Committee, Sheriff Polky, and the Knox county commissioners,

2/12/25

I'm writing on behalf of the Knox County Jail Board of Visitors. I was appointed to a 3-year term by Sheriff Polky in October 2023 and am not aware of any other board members at this time. Each of Maine's county jail facilities are required to appoint a board of visitors according to Title 30-A §1651, which also outlines our responsibilities.

I would have liked to tour the jail as required, but Sheriff Polky's office did not grant my requests to tour in June or September 2024. Incarcerated people need to be able to speak with board members who can gather and integrate their experiences, alongside that of community members and stakeholders, into the required annual report. I wish that I could have included their perspectives alongside mine on this page.

Even without having toured the facility, I have concerns about the Knox County Jail. A woman killed herself in Knox county's custody in September 2024. She hung herself at the jail and was flown to a hospital where she died within 1-2 days. I had known her for a year – she was an aspiring novelist with an wonderful sense of humor. In addition to her death, there were also serious enough concerns around prison rape that the Knox County Jail underwent a PREA audit in 2024.

I recognize that jails are tasked with the impossible – housing the unhoused, providing medical services to those who've been rejected from local hospitals, keeping people with all sorts of trauma safe from one another in very close quarters. And it's expensive – the Corrections budget was the largest portion of our county's budget this year according to our local newspaper. I believe that Maine's BOV law is an important tool that can help every facility in our state to improve the services they provide.

We are still waiting for the required response to our 2023 report from Sheriff Polky's office. I emailed the CJPS committee in June and CJPS chair Sen. Beebe-Center in September requesting a copy of the response and haven't received it yet.

I look forward to resuming tours of the Knox County Jail in 2025, and to meeting any new board members who may be appointed to serve alongside me. Below is a list of documents I'm requesting from the jail to assist us in our 2025 report.

In service,

Luca Mellon  
Knox County Jail Board of Visitors  
Rockland, ME  
(207) 542-9789

Requested documentation:

- Response to 2023 BOV report
- 2024 PREA audit
- Contracts with the following service providers: Correctional Psychiatric Services, Volunteers of America, Maine Pretrial Services, Two Bridges Regional Jail