



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

1 August 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 162, "An Act To Improve Care Provided to Forensic Patients."

It is essential that our mental health system is capable of providing an adequate level of services for those who need it most, and this bill clearly recognizes the need for one of these specialized services. It is heartening to know the Legislature agrees with the necessity of a secure forensic rehabilitation facility. Our Administration is eager to expand the quality and accessibility of psychiatric services, and we are excited about the impact these services will have on the broader mental health services community, including Maine's psychiatric hospitals, Dorothea Dix and Riverview Psychiatric Centers. Unfortunately, even in our agreement that this service is necessary, we differ in approach and location of a secure forensic rehabilitation facility. This disagreement is significant.

Originally, my administration planned this step-down facility in Augusta adjacent to the property of the Riverview Psychiatric Center. The proposed service was similar to services provided by our Maine community providers for decades. When the Legislature began politically motivated stalling tactics and refused to approve this approach several times, we were forced to identify an alternative solution. As we began to consider alternative approaches, our best option for patients and services was to build the facility on state land in Bangor, adjacent to the Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center. This provides close proximity to state psychiatrists and the infrastructure of a quality psychiatric hospital.

This plan is well underway, and the passage of LD 162 would create significant disruption in our process and would delay further the development of a step-down forensic facility to serve forensic patients who are no longer in need of a hospital level of care.

Earlier this spring, DHHS released an RFP for services and the RFQ for the building. Proposals for the provision of the services are due on September 13, and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services is now reviewing quotes for the construction of the building.




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Additionally, this bill would require the secure forensic rehabilitation facility to be operated by the state, growing state government at a significantly increased cost to Maine's taxpayers. This bill has not identified the total funding sources to cover the costs of building or running the proposed facility; yet at the same time it intends to utilize the same funds identified by DHHS to fund the Bangor facility.

For these reasons, I return LD 162 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,


Paul R. LePage
Governor