

2. The State of Maine had parole up until 1976. The people incarcerated before that time were eligible for parole. They took parole away, and now are thinking about bringing it back 50 years later. What about the incarcerated individuals in the middle of that timeframe? Without a meaningful pathway to parole Maine risks creating a two-tier system of justice in which individuals serving sentences have vastly different opportunities for demonstrating rehabilitation and earning a second chance. Accountability must remain, but so must the opportunity to demonstrate that change is possible. Some individuals incarcerated after 1976 until now have completed more programs voluntarily than the incarcerated individuals that are made to comply with a case plan.

The Legislature should carefully examine prospective versus retrospective parole, ensuring that eligibility rules are fair, transparent, and consistent with applicable legal requirements. Individuals already incarcerated shouldn't be overlooked simply because their sentences were imposed before a new system was established. Justice shouldn't mean punishment without purpose or a future without hope. A carefully structured parole system can preserve accountability while recognizing rehabilitation, restoring hope, reducing unnecessary incarceration cost, and providing a meaningful opportunity for individuals to return to society as responsible citizens. Public safety and the possibility of redemption need not be opposing goals.

If there are concerns for cost, like cost for parole officers, parole office buildings, etc, that can easily be solved by stopping paying overtime to the correctional officers that sit in the prisons while the incarcerated individuals are locked in their cells anyway. They're literally getting paid time and a half for 12 hours just to sit there and play on their cellphones. This occurs every single day. These are the hidden issues that society doesn't know about. Also, the GlobalTelLink phone system is making hundreds of thousands of dollars off of incarcerated individuals' loved ones. There's money within Maine DOC that isn't being accounted for.

I believe Maine should carefully consider the consequences of bringing back parole for the people who are already incarcerated compared to only allowing it for people who are sentenced in the future. Retrospective parole would give people who are currently in prison an opportunity to show that they have changed, taken responsibility for their actions, and are ready to return to their community. However Maine would need to make sure there are clear rules in place to protect public safety, consider the concerns of victims, and provide proper supervision and support. Prospective parole would only apply to people sentenced after the new law takes effect, which would mean that people who are already incarcerated would not have the same opportunity.

I believe Maine should consider allowing eligible individuals who are already serving their sentences to be reviewed for parole because everyone deserves a fair opportunity to show that they can make positive changes in their lives. Reestablishing parole would give people who demonstrate rehabilitation and responsibility a chance to work toward returning to society.

3. I believe Maine should have a fair decision making process for the parole board so that everyone is treated fairly and decisions are made for the right reasons. The board should look at the seriousness of the crime, the person's behavior while in prison, their participation in rehabilitation programs, and whether they are ready to return to the community. I also believe that there should be clear eligibility requirements that individuals must meet before being considered for parole. The parole board should take the original sentence and the courts decision into consideration to help make sure that parole decisions are fair and consistent with the sentencing process. Board members should also receive training on sentencing laws, public safety, rehabilitation, and recognizing personal bias when making decisions. I believe these steps would help Maine create a parole system that holds people accountable for their actions while also giving eligible individuals a fair opportunity to show that they have changed their lives.

October 29, 2026

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Lee, and Honorable members of the Parole Commission.

Thank-you for this opportunity to address you.

My name is Jan Collins, I am a resident of Wilton and a member of the Franklin County Detention Center Board of Visitors. I am here today speaking on my own behalf.

I would like to address several topics.

First, there is no need to overhaul sentencing in Maine.

1. Parole does not change the sentence, it only directs where the sentence will be served.

2. Sentence structure was **not** changed when Supervised Community Confinement was made available. So why should it be now?

3. The Commissioner of the Department of Corrections has always had the authority to determine the placement of any resident, including in the community. This does not effect sentencing structure, nor does it effect sentence length.

4. There are states that have had fixed sentences and also had parole. Louisiana is an example. In addition, when the Supreme Court did away with life sentences for children under the age of eighteen, states determined eligibility for parole based on a fixed term of years served, or on a proportion of sentence served just as is proposed in Representative Milliken's bill.

Second, parole eligibility should be retroactive.

1. Since there is no need to overhaul sentencing, the people currently incarcerated will have been sentenced under the same conditions as those sentenced in the future and should therefore be allowed the same ability to apply for parole.

2. Parole eligibility is based on the crime. Parole is based on redemption and rehabilitation. Once the resident has achieved the goals in their rehabilitation plan, they are by definition ready to begin reintegration into the community. That is as true for people sentenced yesterday as it will be for people sentenced in the future.

Third - Parole has been continuous in Maine since 1913.

When parole eligibility was ended in 1976, it did not do away with parole itself. There were hundreds of people already on parole and hundreds more who retained their eligibility because they were sentenced prior to 1976. We continue to have an active parole board to hear their applications and to review infractions.

Even today, there are 12 people remaining who were sentenced prior to 1976. In addition there are people who have moved here from other states who are on parole in Maine and there are other parolees who were sentenced in other states, but are serving time in Maine and will be eligible for parole.

Why have we not heard of these parolees? Because parole works.

Fourth - For parole's 113 years in Maine, there have never been exclusions for any crimes.

Conditions for program completion have been applied to certain crime categories, but none have been excluded. Nor have there been any conditions that called for summary dismissals. Everyone receives a hearing. When an application is denied, the board takes the opportunity to talk to the applicant about what they can do to improve their chances of success in the future. This is an important part of the rehabilitation process and the parole process.

It is the solemn responsibility of the parole board to determine if and when someone is safe for release into the community. The legislature should allow them to make this decision. The parole board has much more information available about individuals than we do.

I want to address domestic violence homicide directly.

The commission heard from two advocacy groups that victims are not a monolith. Some victims do not want punishment, but prefer treatment instead. Others want severe punishment. The same is true for people who commit harm. They are not all the same. Most will be able to rehabilitate others may not.

My father was a wonderful person when he was sober. Everyone would tell you that Ray was a great guy. But when he drank, he became a violent abuser. I witnessed him kicking my pregnant mother as she lay curled up on the floor protecting her belly. It is only by the grace of God that he did not kill someone. He needed treatment, not a life sentence. I loved him just the same.

I am also a victim of domestic violence homicide. When my grandson died, I cried for weeks. I could not think of him, much less speak of him, without sobbing. Some days I just wanted to curl up in a ball and disappear. I could not believe that such a thing could happen. I could not believe that this was my life.

At no point in my sorrow did I want retribution. The death of my grandson was the impetus for my involvement in criminal legal reform. I saw first hand that the system as it exists today is meant to deliver punishment, that the people who get trapped in the criminal legal system are poor, black, and/or sick. Most have experienced a life filled with trauma. More trauma in the prison system will not solve that. Anyone who can achieve rehabilitation despite all these impediments should be both applauded and rewarded.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jan

**Testimony to the Commission to Examine the Intersection of Parole and
Current Sentencing Practices**

October 29, 2026

Linda Small, Executive Director, Reentry Sisters



Hello, Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Lee, and members of the
Commission.

My name is Linda Small. I'm the Executive Director of Reentry Sisters, a Maine organization serving justice-impacted women and girls. I'm also a member of Healing First, a Maine-based transformative justice collective led by survivors of serious harm, including sexual assault and domestic partner violence, who support earned early release programs. I spent nearly a year in the Supervised Community Confinement Program, and I am still on probation. I bring both my lived experience navigating these systems and my work alongside survivors and justice-impacted women to this conversation.

I want to focus on how parole fits within Maine's existing sentencing framework, particularly how it differs from supervised community confinement, or SCCP.

Maine's parole system should apply retrospectively because if Maine determines that people should have an opportunity to earn release based on their rehabilitation, current risk, accountability, and readiness to return to the community, that opportunity should not depend solely on the year they were sentenced. Making parole prospective only would create two classes of people serving sentences: those who have an opportunity for review and those who do not, even when their circumstances and progress may be similar. Retrospective parole would not mean automatic release. It would mean a fair, individualized review that considers public safety, survivor safety, the harm caused, and evidence of change. People already serving sentences should have that opportunity, too.

Maine already recognizes that a person's transition back to the community can be considered while they are still serving a sentence.

SCCP is a valuable late-stage reentry program, but it is not a substitute for parole. As of September 1, 2026, 65 people were participating in SCCP statewide, about 3% of Maine's adult corrections population. The program recorded a decline in placements since 2023 (149 placements in 2023, 136 in 2024, and 107 in 2025). The average completed placement was 181 days in 2024 and 208 days in 2025—roughly six to seven months.

These figures illustrate the distinction: SCCP helps people transition to the community near the end of a sentence. Parole would provide a separate process to evaluate whether someone serving a longer sentence may be ready to return to the community, based on individual circumstances, rehabilitation, current risk, and appropriate supervision. I see them as complementary approaches, not interchangeable ones.

I also believe any parole system must be transparent and equitable. The questions raised by SCCP data about application decisions and racial representation demonstrate why eligibility standards, trained

decision-makers, written reasons for decisions, public reporting, and review outside the Department of Corrections matter.

From my experience, people can grow, change, participate in programming, pursue education, address trauma, and develop plans for their future. But without a parole process, there is no comparable mechanism to evaluate that progress and determine whether someone may be ready to return to the community before reaching the final stretch of their sentence.

Public safety requires us to consider not only what brought someone into prison, but also the person they have become, the risks they present today, and the support and accountability needed for a safe return home.

As a member of Healing First, I believe survivor safety and the impact of the original harm must be taken seriously. Supporting earned early release does not mean overlooking harm or diminishing survivors' experiences. It means creating a careful, accountable process that considers survivor safety alongside rehabilitation, individual circumstances, and the realities a person will face upon release.

Parole should complement—not duplicate—existing supervision programs. It should have clear standards, trained decision-makers, appropriate conditions, and meaningful oversight outside of the current SCCP program.

A sentence should hold a person accountable for the harm they caused. But accountability and the possibility of change are not mutually exclusive. Maine needs a process to evaluate that change, consider public and survivor safety, and determine when someone may be ready to return to the community under supervision. That is the role parole can play.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Linda Small
Executive Director
Reentry Sisters
linda@reentrysisters.org

References:

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Maine Department of Corrections (2026). 2026 Adult Data Report, Page 14. <https://www.maine.gov/corrections/sites/maine.gov.corrections/files/inline-files/August%202026%20Monthly%20Adult%20Data%20Report.pdf>



Maine Department of Corrections 2025 Year End Adult Data Report

3.6 SCCP Cases

The purpose of the Supervised Community Confinement Program (SCCP) is to provide a means of successful reentry of adult facility residents into the community. Residents transferred to supervised community confinement are still considered to be in the legal custody of the Department while in the program. The place of confinement is in the community, rather than in a Department facility. Participation in this program is a privilege which may be afforded to eligible residents who meet the criteria.

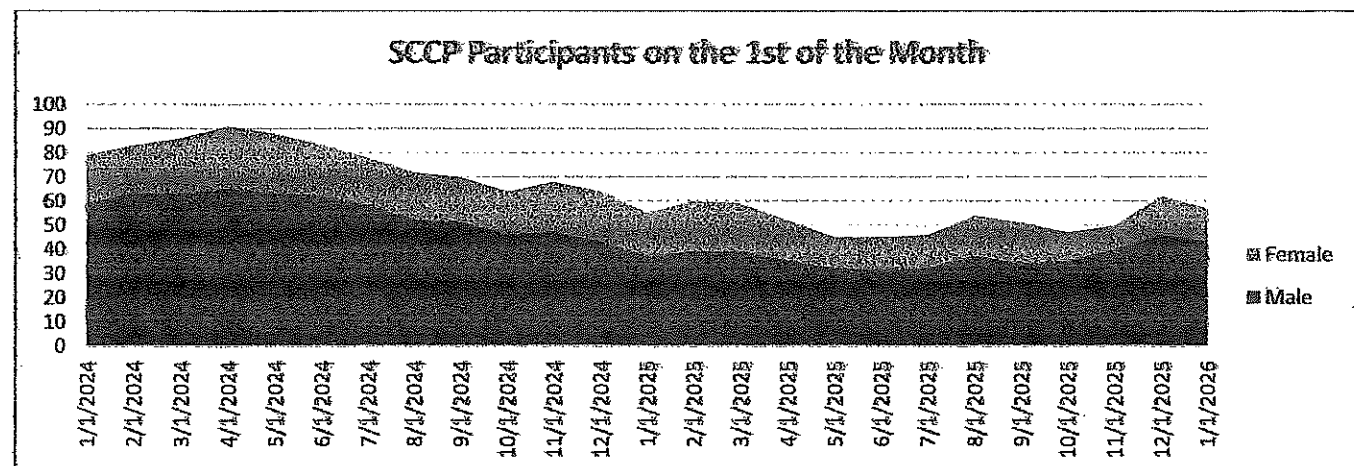
"SCCP Placements" are new placements into the community on SCCP status and "SCCP Violations" are those returning to a secure DOC facility from the community who have violated the conditions of the SCCP program.

		2023	2024	2025
Male	SCCP Placements	110	96	75
	SCCP Completions	94	90	53
	Violations (return to custody)	22	28	12
	Other*	3	1	2
Female	SCCP Placements	39	40	32
	SCCP Completions	30	30	31
	Violations (return to custody)	9	8	3
	Other*	0	1	0
All	SCCP Placements	149	136	107
	SCCP Completions	124	120	84
	Violations (return to custody)	31	36	15
	Other*	3	2	2

	2023	2024	2025
All Clients Success Rate	80%	77%	85%
Male Success Rate	81%	76%	82%
Female Success Rate	77%	79%	91%

Avg. Length of SCCP Ended in 2025

Avg. Length of Completed SCCP	208 Days
Avg. Length of SCCP before Violation	110 Days





Maine Department of Corrections August 2026 Data Reporting

4.0 Supervised Community Confinement Program (SCCP)

The purpose of the Supervised Community Confinement Program is to provide a means of successful reentry of facility residents into the community. Residents transferred to supervised community confinement are still considered facility residents while in the program. The place of confinement is in the community, rather than in a correctional facility. Participation in this program is a privilege that may be afforded to residents who meet the established criteria.

Current Participant Data as of 09/01/2026

Current Participants by Facility

Male	BCF	21
	DCF	5
	MCC	0
	MSP	0
	MVCF	22
Female	SMWRC	17
Total		65

Current Participants by Region

Region 1	14
Region 2	21
Region 3	30
Total	65

Current Participants Race & Gender Demographics

Race	SCCP Participants		MDOC Population	
	M	F	M	F
Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.9%
Black or African American	8.3%	5.9%	14.1%	2.8%
Native American	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	3.3%
Native Hawaiian	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Two or More Races	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.5%
Unknown	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%
White	91.7%	94.1%	79.1%	92.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2026
Male	SCCP Placements	15	12	10	2	10	4	6	8	-	-	-	-	67
	SCCP Completions	5	8	4	10	5	5	9	5	-	-	-	-	51
	Violations (return to custody)	1	1	2	0	3	1	0	2	-	-	-	-	10
Female	SCCP Placements	3	2	6	2	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	18
	SCCP Completions	3	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	-	-	-	-	9
	Violations (return to custody)	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	-	-	-	-	5
All	SCCP Placements	18	14	16	4	11	5	7	10	-	-	-	-	85
	SCCP Completions	8	8	4	13	6	6	10	5	-	-	-	-	60
	Violations (return to custody)	1	3	3	0	4	2	0	2	-	-	-	-	15

SCCP applicants and participants may appeal the decision to deny their transfer to SCCP or the decision to remove them from the program. The decisions made after the review of each appeal are included in the table below.

Response to Appeal	Appeal of SCCP Transfer Denial		Appeal of Removal from SCCP	
	August 2026	2026	August 2026	2026
Decision Upheld	0	22	0	0
Decision Reversed	0	0	0	0
Decision Modified	0	0	0	0
Remanded for Further Review	0	0	0	0
Total Decisions after Appeal	0	22	0	0



Maine Department of Corrections August 2026 Supervised Community Confinement Program Data

The purpose of the Supervised Community Confinement Program (SCCP) is to provide a means of successful reentry of adult facility residents into the community. Residents transferred to supervised community confinement are still considered to be in the legal custody of the Department while in the program. The place of confinement is in the community, rather than in a Department facility. Participation in this program is a privilege which may be afforded to eligible residents who meet the criteria.

Current Participants by Responsible Facility

	Male	Female
Baldwin Correctional Facility	21	0
Dowd Correctional Facility	5	0
Maine Correctional Center	0	0
Maine State Prison	0	0
Mountain View Correctional Facility	22	0
Southern Maine Women's Reentry Center	0	17
Total	48	17

Current Participants by Community Region

Region 1	14
Region 2	21
Region 3	30
Total	65

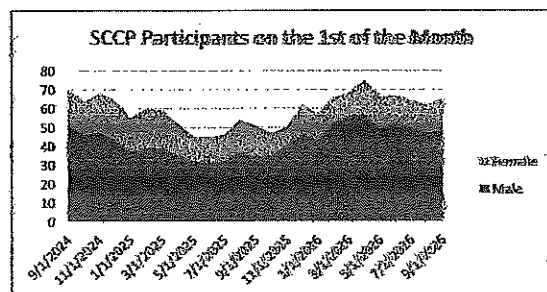
Race & Gender Demographics

Race	SCCP Participants		DOC Population	
	M	F	M	F
Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.9%
Black or African American	8.3%	5.9%	18.1%	2.8%
Native American	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	3.3%
Native Hawaiian	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Two or More Races	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.5%
Unknown	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%
White	91.7%	94.1%	79.1%	93.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

SCCP Applications in Process	50
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SCCP Reviews Completed

2024 Total	257
2025 Total	276
2026 YTD	181



	2024	2025	Aug-26	2026 YTD
Male	SCCP Placements	95	75	8
	SCCP Completions	90	53	5
	Violations (return to custody)	28	12	2
	Other*	1	2	0
Female	SCCP Placements	40	32	2
	SCCP Completions	30	31	0
	Violations (return to custody)	8	3	0
	Other*	1	0	0
All	SCCP Placements	135	107	10
	SCCP Completions	120	84	5
	Violations (return to custody)	36	15	2
	Other*	2	2	0

*No violation but did not complete. Excluded from below completion rates.

2024 Successful SCCP Completion Rates

All Clients Success Rate	77%
Male Success Rate	76%
Female Success Rate	79%

2025 Successful SCCP Completion Rates

All Clients Success Rate	85%
Male Success Rate	82%
Female Success Rate	91%

2026 YTD Successful SCCP Completion Rates

All Clients Success Rate	80%
Male Success Rate	84%
Female Success Rate	64%

Violations in 2024

Total SCCP Violations	36
Technical Violation Entered in CORIS	5
Discipline Entered into CORIS	20

Violations in 2025

Total SCCP Violations	15
Technical Violation Entered in CORIS	3
Discipline Entered into CORIS	10

Violations in 2026 YTD

Total SCCP Violations	15
Technical Violation Entered in CORIS	5
Discipline Entered into CORIS	10

Honorable Commissioners, my name is Deborah Hylton, I am a resident of Brunswick and my husband Leo Hylon is currently incarcerated at Maine State Prison. I've greatly appreciated this commission's care and attention to the issues raised and wanted to address our understanding of how parole, if reestablished in Maine would interact with other Maine statutes related to Supervised Community Confinement Program (SCCP) and how a Parole Board's decision-making process can be designed to take care of supporting the wellbeing of victim-survivors.

First, on SCCP, the previously introduced parole bill, LD 1941, incorporated SCCP into its functionality. This inclusion which can be found in Part B, Section 5825, number 7A, had been vetted and adjusted according to guidance from the legislative analyst at the time. parole will be complementary to SCCP, addressing the opportunity of demonstration of rehabilitation of longer-term incarcerated people in the way that SCCP serves those with shorter sentences.

Additionally, to address the Parole Board's decision making process, it is important to make a clear distinction between the administration of parole and that of SCCP. Whereas SCCP is administered exclusively by DOC personnel, parole would be administered by professionals of varied disciplines, in deep partnership with DOC personnel. This distinction is very important. The diverse perspective of these professionals will be critical to the opportunity for success of parole's implementation as well as for our community's safety. The Board's decisions would be guided by an objective, race-sensitive, actuarial risk assessment to help remediate the stark racial disparity of sentences handed down across the state of Maine. Board members should be trained on the need for, and implementation of, that tool. Also important to note is that the Board would have the power to summarily dismiss an application that failed to show sufficient planning and preparation for a safe and stable reentry to the applicant's outside community.

To support a well functioning parole process, one that cares for the needs of returning community members and those they harmed, Board members should receive training in trauma-informed practices, restorative justice, best practices in parole administration, and actual risk factors for reoffense in addition to the aforementioned training on the risk assessment tool. Thank you for allowing me the space to speak and for your thoughtful consideration and discourse on this topic. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Deborah Hylton
Brunswick, ME

Reestablishing Parole in Maine

-On Behalf of F Daly

Section 1: How Parole Should Fit Within Maine's Sentencing Framework

Maine should establish parole as an independent release-review process that complements, rather than replaces, judicial sentencing, probation, and the Supervised Community Confinement Program, or SCCP.

Courts would retain authority to impose sentences under Maine law. The Department of Corrections would continue to manage incarceration, rehabilitation, assessments, release preparation, and community supervision within its statutory responsibilities. An independent parole board would determine whether eligible individuals could safely serve the remainder of their sentences under community supervision.

SCCP, authorized under Title 34-A, section 3036-A, should remain a distinct correctional placement program, while probation should retain its separate legal function as a court-imposed sentence or sentencing component.

The Legislature should establish clear rules governing eligibility, sentence calculations, supervision conditions, violations, and transitions between programs.

The objective is to connect existing correctional resources without duplicating responsibilities, preserve judicial authority, protect public safety, and ensure that parole operates as a coordinated part of Maine's sentencing framework—not as automatic release.

Section 2: Retrospective Versus Prospective Parole

Maine must decide whether a new parole system applies to people already serving sentences, future sentences, or both.

Retrospective parole would allow eligible people currently incarcerated to receive individualized review. This could recognize rehabilitation and reduced risk sooner, but it would require careful transition rules, sufficient board capacity, and analysis of existing sentences.

Prospective parole would apply to people sentenced after the new law takes effect. It would make parole eligibility clearer at sentencing and allow gradual implementation, but it would delay the system's reach to future cohorts and leave existing prisoners outside the new framework unless separately addressed.

Therefore, this Commission should consider a hybrid approach: establish a retrospective/prospective parole as the permanent framework while creating a clearly defined transitional process for eligible people already incarcerated.

While eligibility will not guarantee release. Every applicant must satisfy the Parole Board, as well as, statutory requirements and undergo an individualized public-safety assessment.

Before implementation, Maine should evaluate the legal, administrative, fiscal, and public-safety consequences of each option. The final legislation must expressly define who qualifies, when review occurs, and how existing sentences are treated.

Section 3: Parole Board Decision-Making, Eligibility, and Training

Maine should establish an independent seven-member parole board with clear statutory standards, qualified membership, ethical safeguards, and mandatory training.

Eligibility should be determined by law, including minimum time served, sentence characteristics, applicable exclusions, institutional conduct, and other statutory requirements. Eligibility should create an opportunity for review—not an entitlement to release.

The board should examine current risk, rehabilitation, treatment progress, institutional behavior, victim input, and the feasibility of a safe release plan. No one should be released unless the board determines that community supervision is consistent with public safety.

To promote parity with judicial sentencing, the board must respect the court-imposed sentence while recognizing that its role is different: courts impose sentences, whereas parole boards evaluate whether the remaining sentence can safely be served under supervision.

Members should receive initial and annual training in Maine sentencing law, risk assessment, rehabilitation, victim rights, ethics, procedural fairness, and community supervision.

Written decisions, consistent review procedures, annual public reporting, and an independent three-year evaluation should ensure accountability, identify disparities, and measure public-safety outcomes and fiscal effects.

Closing Statement

Maine does not need to choose between preserving judicial sentences and recognizing demonstrated rehabilitation. It can maintain accountability while creating a structured, independent process for determining when continued incarceration is no longer necessary to protect the public.

The Commission should recommend legislation that clearly defines eligibility, protects victims, coordinates existing correctional programs, trains decision-makers, and requires transparent measurement of outcomes.

The goal is not automatic release. It is individualized, conditional, and accountable decision-making grounded in public safety, consistent standards, and evidence.

“Thank You All For Your Time”

I strongly believe that Maine should reestablish parole because people deserve the opportunity to show that they can change their lives and become productive members of society. I believe that serving time in prison should not mean that a person loses the chance to rebuild their future. Parole would give eligible individuals something positive to work toward by encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions, participate in substance use treatment, further their education, and learn new skills that can help them find employment. I understand that public safety must always be a priority, but I also believe that rehabilitation should be an important part of the criminal justice system. Reestablishing parole would allow individuals who demonstrate progress and readiness to return to their communities under supervision instead of requiring them to serve their entire sentences without the opportunity to prove that they can make positive changes.

1. I also strongly believe that parole should work alongside probation and the supervised community confinement program under Title 34-A § 3036(A). These programs can play important roles in helping individuals transition from incarceration back into the community.

3. Maine should establish clear guidelines explaining how parole would work with these existing programs to provide appropriate supervision, support, and accountability. I believe reestablishing parole could give families, and become responsible members of their communities without a meaningful opportunity for parole, some individuals may leave prison without some level of preparation and the support that a structured release process could provide.

I believe Maine has an opportunity to create a criminal justice system that holds people accountable while also recognizing the importance of rehabilitation and second chances. For these reasons, I strongly support reestablishing parole in Maine because I believe it can benefit individuals, families, and public safety.

October 26, 2026

To: Commission to Examine the Intersection of Parole and Current Sentencing Practices

From: Lucas Rogers MDOC#152311

Reestablishing a parole system in Maine should be approved as an opportunity to promote public safety, accountability, and fairness within our Maine criminal D.O.J system. Any parole legislation should clearly define how parole fits within Maine's existing sentencing framework, including probation and D.O.C's supervised community confinement program. A coordinated approach would reduce conflicting requirements, strengthen supervision and provide a structured pathway for eligible individuals to return to the community while protecting public safety.

The legislature must also carefully consider the consequences of prospective versus retrospective parole. While retrospective approach should include clear eligibility standards, appropriate safeguards and individualism to ensure fairness, consistency and respect for all applicable legal requirements. Equally important is the decision-making process used by the state parole board. Decisions should be guided by the transport criteria, validated risk assessments, demonstrated rehabilitation, institutional conduct, victims' consideration, and the safety of the community.

Board members should receive training to promote consistency, accountability and parity between judicial sentencing decisions and parole determinations.

Maine has an opportunity to establish a parole system that balances justice with the possibility of rehabilitation, with clear statutory guidance, equitable procedures and meaningful oversight.

Parole can support successful reentry, reduce unnecessary incarceration costs and strength public safety without diminishing accountability for criminal conduct.

Respectfully,

Lucas Rogers

October 26, 2026

To: Commission to Examine the Intersection of Parole and Current Sentencing Practices

From: Neil Canney MDOC#172620

As our state looks towards modernizing the criminal justice systems framework. I write in the hope that my strong support for the reestablishment of a state parole system will be viewed in the intended light. LET'S STOP THROWING OUR PEOPLE AWAY !! It's a proven fact that our penal system is the largest (per capita) in the world. For such a young country, how is that possible? A well-functioning parole system is an essential mechanism for managing a controlled supervised reentry process that not only enhances public safety but provides the needed incentives for true rehabilitation. When there is no hope there can be no true growth for the better.

However, to prevent structural imbalances and avoid historic pitfalls of arbitrary sentencing, the enacting legislation must deliberately address two critical areas of policy: the temporal scope of the system and the parity of the board's decision-making process with the judiciary.

I believe the decision on whether to make such a parole system retrospective or prospective is crucial in the board's birth. It would be a travesty of justice if those residents who have spent the better part of 20-30 years showing a strong desire to change without the hope for parole, to be overlooked just because they committed their crimes years earlier, but someone that has committed the same crime now will have the opportunity for a second chance, knowing that if they do this and that they may get a Second chance at life. For untold years the lawmakers have heard how the prison systems are so overcrowded, the making of a parole system that is retrospective would almost instantly alleviate that problem. So in conclusion, I strongly advocate for a parole system that is if not a hybrid of both retrospective and prospective then fully retrospective. I believe that the people who make these kinds of decisions know the importance of allowing people a second chance at life. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Neil Canney

Nathanael Nightingale
Maine State Prison

Parole Commission
Public Comment for 10/29/2026

My name is Nathanael Kenneth Nightingale. I am currently serving 40 yrs. for a murder at the Maine State Prison and am urging you to vote "ought to pass" on reinstating retroactive parole. I want to begin by accepting full accountability for my actions. I do not minimize the gravity of my crime, nor the profound pain I have ceased. I carry that truth everyday. I am also asking this for my family, who have carried the heavy, silent burden of this sentence alongside me.



October 26, 2026

To: Commission to Examine the Intersection of Parole and Current Sentencing Practices

From: Parole4Maine, a Maine non-profit organization

The first duty of this current Commission is examining “How parole fits in with the overall sentencing framework of the Maine Revised Statutes.” We respectfully submit that **because parole does not change any sentence**, parole and sentencing are separate and complementary. Rather than changing any sentence, parole, if and when granted, only changes the location and conditions of serving the sentence.¹

The confusion is understandable since parole is most often accompanied by indeterminate sentences, setting a range such as “5 to 10 years,” rather than a definite or flat sentence that we use in Maine.² The parole bill in the 132nd Legislative Session, LD 1941, proposed a different approach, setting **parole eligibility** as a *proportion* of the flat sentence—the time at which a person could be considered.³

This proposal allows for parole applications from some of those sentenced after May 1, 1976, as well as applications from persons sentenced in the future while retaining the definite or flat sentences we are used to in Maine. Parole would be consistent even when applied retrospectively to existing flat sentences

¹ This is in sharp distinction from *State v Hunter* (1983) which addressed a statute allowing the Sentencing Court, on petition from the Department of Corrections, to directly change the sentence itself. Currently, the only things that change the actual sentence are the routine actions of low-level DOC workers awarding or withholding Good Time.

² See Anspach, Lehman and Kramer, [*Maine Rejects Indeterminacy*](#), National Institute of Justice, 1983, for a discussion of these distinctions as they pertain to Maine.

³ Under the proposed bill, people serving a life sentence with eligibility for parole would have their first parole hearing after serving 20 years in prison. People serving a sentence of at least 5 years would have their first parole hearing after serving 1/3 of their sentence or 20 years, whichever is less. People serving a sentence less than five years would not be eligible for parole since the Supervised Community Confinement Program (SCCP) addresses this population.



We should also note that in the future, parole might serve as a replacement for “split sentences” – when the Court suspends part of the incarceration time and substitutes probation. In those cases, people are required to be released from incarceration at a predetermined time regardless of readiness. With parole, release under supervision would wait until the Board were convinced that success was probable.

In addition, Parole is compatible with, and generally enhances, the nine purposes of sentencing in Maine statutes ([Title 17-A, §1501](#)). With its ongoing evaluation of progress towards living in the community, parole would enhance both recognizing on-going need for incapacitation (Purposes 1 and 3) and encouraging rehabilitation while minimizing correctional experiences when not necessary (Purposes 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9). At the same time, the sentence imposed would remain, providing public notice and possible deterrence, enhancing Purposes 1, 4 and 8.

It is also important to distinguish between the Supervised Community Confinement Program (SCCP) and parole. SCCP is limited in time (most commonly one year with a maximum of 30 months) and is processed completely by regular DOC case workers in addition to their regular jobs. Parole is longer term and applications would be processed by specialized staff and a Parole Board whose primary function and expertise is in evaluating potential risk to the community and rehabilitative progress.

Moreover, the Board can operate more independently and with more public visibility and accountability.

As a recent report and evaluation of parole in Virginia notes:

The Parole Board’s job is to examine each case individually and determine whether release is appropriate. That responsibility often involves extraordinarily difficult cases - serious underlying offenses, lengthy sentences, decades of incarceration, evidence of rehabilitation, public-safety considerations, and the circumstances of victims and their families. Reasonable people may disagree about individual decisions, but making those difficult judgments is precisely what a parole board is charged with doing. ([Cavalier Consulting, 2026](#))

In order to fulfill these high expectations, the legislation calls for a Parole Board with varied professional experience and expertise to complement and reinforce each other’s strengths as well as annual specialized training for the Board members and staff.

Respectfully,
Parole4Maine



Comment on Question 3 Presented by the Commission to Examine the Intersection of Parole and Current Sentencing Practices

October 29, 2026

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Lee, and members of the Commission to Examine the Intersection of Parole and Current Sentencing Practices, my name is Sam Zuckerman. I am the Policy Specialist of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations. I am submitting this comment regarding Question 3 of your request for public comment, asking what the decision-making process should be employed by the State Parole Board, including any eligibility specific requirements or training required to ensure parity between sentencing decisions and made by the courts and parole decisions made by the board.

The Permanent Commission's Policy Committee broadly supports policy and legislation that would make systemic reforms to Maine's criminal legal system, including those that create and expand opportunities that are supportive to reentry. However, parole systems can perpetuate the inequities that are present in our criminal legal system and those inequities must be taken into account when determining how a parole system should work and what training should be required of those implementing it.

A parole system that is accessible, transparent, and supportive of those participating in them is an elusive undertaking – according to the Prison Policy Initiative, no state has earned higher than a B minus grade for its parole system.¹ And most parole systems became even harder to navigate during the COVID-19 pandemic, with parole approval rates dropping in most states between 2019 and 2022.² Many parole systems also allow for discretionary and subjective assessments rather than requiring uniform,

¹ Jorge Renaud, Prison Policy Initiative. *Grading the Parole Release Systems of All 50 States*. (2019). https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/grading_parole.html

² Emmett Sanders, Prison Policy Initiative. *No Release: Parole Grant Rates Have Plummeted in Most States Since the Pandemic Started*. (2023). <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2023/10/16/parole-grants/>

transparent standards for determining parole eligibility.³ This creates the potential for implicit bias to influence decisions on who is and is not granted parole.⁴

Black Mainers are incarcerated at a rate of nine times more and Indigenous people are incarcerated at a rate of six times more than white Mainers.⁵ Given this existing and significant inequity in our criminal legal system, the parole system you build must explicitly address equity for marginalized groups that are overrepresented in our corrections systems. The original bill that this commission came from required an actuarial evidence-based risk assessment to be the central factor that is weighed, and for that assessment to account for racial bias. That is a start, but additional training for parole board members regarding implicit bias could be another way to ensure that equity is a built-in feature of the parole system. Some experts also recommend that eligibility for review should renew annually and that parole hearings should require a presumption of eligibility.⁶ These recommendations serve to support equity because they make the parole process more transparent and accessible and they put the burden of proof onto the state, rather than onto incarcerated individuals who may lack resources to adequately represent themselves. Ultimately, the goal should be for an equitable and transparent system so that every incarcerated Mainer has the same opportunity to qualify for parole.

Thank you for your time and attention. We urge you to incorporate racial equity as an explicit factor in parole board decisions and in training for parole board members.

³ Emmett Sanders, Prison Policy Initiative. *Prison Policy Initiative and MacArthur Justice Center's National Parole Transformation Project Release New Guiding Principles for Parole Reform*. (2025). <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2025/07/10/parole-principles/>

⁴ Jessica Eaglin and Danyelle Solomon, Brennan Center for Justice. *Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Jails: Recommendations for Local Practice*. (2015). Page 25-26. [https://www.brennancenter.org/media/121/download/Report_Racial%20Disparities%20Report%20062515.p
df?inline=1](https://www.brennancenter.org/media/121/download/Report_Racial%20Disparities%20Report%20062515.pdf?inline=1)

⁵ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2022). Jail inmates in 2021. <https://rb.gy/3c10x>

⁶ See note i.

October 26, 2026

To: Commission to Examine the Intersection of Parole and Current Sentencing Practices

From: Pedro E Santiago MDOC#26561

Pedro E. Santiago; statement of support for reestablishing parole in Maine.

Reestablishing parole in Maine offers an opportunity to promote public safety, accountability, rehabilitation, and fairness within our criminal justice system. Without a meaningful pathway to parole Maine risks creating a two-tier system of justice in which opportunities for rehabilitation and second chances are limited. Eliminating the possibility of an earned opportunity to complete a sentence under supervision in the community can eliminate hope and weaken incentives to pursue education, treatment, and personal growth. Accountability must remain, but so must the opportunity to demonstrate meaningful change.

Legislation must address the legal complexities of integrating parole with Maine's sentencing framework, including probation and the Department of Correction's supervised community confinement program under title 34-A subsection 3036-A. Clear eligibility standards and procedures are sentencing and parole decisions. A carefully designed system should also consider the potential for re-traumatization of victims and survivors. Victim notification, meaningful opportunities to be heard, appropriate protection without automatically ignoring the possibility of rehabilitation.

Maine should also confront the challenges of an aging prison population, including the growing demands of long term incarceration, age related needs, and associated correctional costs. Individualized parole review can provide a measured way to evaluate rehabilitation, public safety, and the circumstances of older incarcerated individuals.

The state parole board should receive comprehensive training and follow consistent, evidence informed standards to promote fairness and parity with judicial sentencing decisions The legislature should also carefully evaluate prospective and retrospective parole to ensure equitable treatment under applicable law. Justice should preserve accountability without extinguishing hope or discriminating against a class of citizens that have proven their due diligence in their rehabilitation.

A well-designed parole system can recognize rehabilitation, pretext public safety, respect victims, and offer a fair opportunity for a meaningful return to society.

Respectfully,

Pedro E Santiago

Public Comment: Parole and Maine's Sentencing Framework

Oct 26, 2026

To: Commission to Examine the Intersection of Parole and Current Sentencing Practices

My name is Sarah Johnson and I reside in Sanford.

I am writing on the issues identified in [Resolve 2025, C. 176](#)

On the issue of retrospective vs prospective parole, the fact is that parole leaves sentences intact. Parole is not a sentence reduction, but as I will elaborate on below, is an opportunity to earn a sentence location and productivity change that enhances safety of the prison system and community.

On the issue of the decision making process and training, there are vast evidence based successful resources available for practices, training and assurance of parity between court and parole board decisions. Numerous trainings are available at the [National Institute of Corrections has Parole Board Trainings](#)¹. The [Colorado DOC](#) cites use of the American Probation and Parole Association resources as their standards include: “Using validated risk-needs assessments is a nationally recognized best practice in community supervision. Organizations such as the [American Probation and Parole Association \(APPA\)](#)² and the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) support evidence-based assessment tools to improve decision-making, enhance public safety, and promote successful reentry.”³

On the issue of how parole fits in with the overall sentencing framework, including the intersection of parole with probation and SCCP.

I am a former volunteer educator in the Maine prison and jail system, and former educator in the New Mexico prison system where a number of my former students are serving the final portions of their sentences under the supervision of a parole system while living, working and thriving in their communities.

¹ <https://nicic.gov/training/catalog/hybrid/parole-board-chairs-members-training>

² https://www.appa-net.org/eweb/docs/APPA/National_Standards_Community_Supervision_FINAL.pdf

³ <https://cdoc.colorado.gov/parole-risk-assessments>

SCCP, probation and parole are independent systems that complement each other serving unique purposes.

SCCP is a short time reentry program only available in the last 30 months of a sentence, and serves a small percentage of the population. According to the [MDOC January 2026 SCCP Program Data](#) there were 276 reviews and 107 placements in 2025 with an average of *208 days served in the community. The average daily incarcerated population was approximately 1900 people in 2025.*⁴.

Probation is imposed at sentencing and so has no methodology to track rehabilitation and growth while incarcerated. It offers no earned opportunity for “second look” reevaluation by a professional board of a person’s rehabilitative and educational accomplishments or ongoing process of redemption during incarceration.

“Second Look” sentencing laws are recommended by numerous organizations for their unique benefits as documented in the National Council of State Legislatures article [Taking a Look at Second Look Sentencing](#):⁵ “The Model Penal Code [recommends judicial review](#)⁶ after 15 years of imprisonment for crimes committed as adults and after 10 years for crimes committed as juveniles. The American Bar Association has [a resolution](#)⁷ supporting judicial resentencing after 10 years of imprisonment.” Parole is a “second look” system.

In my experience with former students serving the remainder of their sentence under the supervision of a parole system, there are a number of beneficial aspects that are unique. The hope of parole was motivational while incarcerated and a driving factor of safety in our prison environment. Programming, rehabilitative growth and clear conduct were everyone’s focus. These women have a longer period of time than SCCP to advance in employment, pay required restitution, build family wealth, pay taxes, care for children and aging parents, shop locally,

⁴

<https://docs.publicnow.com/viewDoc?filename=131389%5CEXT%5C9F92E47BDD03E4D3BA39D48F9963E7BCCF9DFBF7BD9C3FCB3BB7FCC79173ADE9903085C482A1BFC3.PDF> page 16 Avg. Length of SCCP in 2025 page 2 Avg population

⁵ <https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/taking-a-look-at-second-look-sentencing>

⁶ <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/resources/on-demand/second-look-sentencing-what-working/>

⁷ https://www.americanbar.org/content/aba-cms-dotorg/en/news/reporter_resources/annual-meeting-2022/house-of-delegates-resolutions/502/

maintain their health and volunteer in their community. The most unique aspect to me is that if they were in Maine, they would all still be incarcerated. Parole has not changed their sentence, but only where and how productively they serve it.

Thank you all for your work.

Respectfully,

Sarah Johnson, Sanford

1. Put most simply, parole would not change the already-established sentencing framework: if you were sentenced to probation, that would still be in effect, to commence once the period of incarceration ends (whether that period was spent in prison or on parole); nothing would change, except the conditions of where and how a person completes their sentence. The dates and sentence-durations don't change.

States like Colorado, Connecticut, Mississippi, and perhaps California all abolished parole and then figured out how to bring it back. I assume each instance was done retrospectively, without having to re-sentence the entire carcero-sphere or rewriting every law which might intersect with it. Eligibility is the providence of the parole board and sentences are not altered, just conditions of confinement. Trust that parole is still a means of confinement; there are no walls but that tether, while invisible, definitely exists. So, how about we stop acting like we're trying to re-invent the wheel here and look at the commonsense, practical solutions which have already been implemented by other states facing similar challenges. Maine is not leading the nation in this regard. It's not a sign of weakness to look to other states for help.

2. The psychological damage that will be done to the five generations of prisoners currently incarcerated, if parole is passed only prospectively, will be *contentious*. You think there are extra-judicial sanctions now? New people will come in, want my job, so they can impress the parole board...it would be arguably worse.

If a State Parole Board should determine a given applicant to be an unfit candidate, the underlying benefit of retrospectively enacted parole would still allow future applicants to proceed with hope. Hope is a force that can drive individuals to put forth extraordinary efforts toward self-betterment; that does not mean, however, that parole will ever be afforded to an unfit candidate. Even if some prisoners are ultimately never afforded the opportunity, enacting retrospective parole may result in an overall prison system that becomes a more helpful and healthy environment in which to live and work.

Relying solely on the Good Time statutes to incentivize individual rehabilitation efforts has proven to produce less than ideal results. Only a very small percentage of prisoners are doing things like getting college degrees, and those who do are completely self-motivated, already possessing the internally occurring desire to do better—the larger majority are compelled to do only the bare minimum required to move through the system, which means ample amounts of mindless, aimless down time—while another portion of prisoners see no reason to make any effort whatsoever.

95% of all prisoners will eventually be returned back to society. In what *condition* do we want these people, when the time comes for them to reintegrate? In what condition do we want people serving their time in prison? When new prisoners enter the system for the first time, they are unerringly influenced by other prisoners already residing within the system. And when some prisoners have been afforded no reason at all to exhibit concern for their own future, how do we think this is then reflected in how they express concern for the future of others around them?

Recidivism may be trending downward in recent years, but we can and must do more for society. Good Time credits are granted to all prisoners who refrain from ill or poor conduct—but this system does absolutely nothing to encourage participation in activities which produce long term reform: educational and vocational programming, community service, civic participation. Enacting retrospective parole is a good deal for Maine prisons and Maine people.

1. Parole, simply put, like SCCP, only deals with the unsuspended portion of a sentence. If a person were sentenced to 25 years, and 5 years of the 25 were suspended, the metrics for parole would only apply to the 20 years. Probation would take over at the end of the 20 years. It is conceivable for an individual to transition from parole to SCCP, then end up on probation.

2. Retrospective parole will affect the number of incarcerated "today". During Covid there was an empty pod due to the courts using alternatives to incarceration. After Covid the courts changed tact again and filled the prison back up. Parole would have the same effect that the courts had during Covid. If we could get the courts to also use alternatives to incarceration and parole we can decrease the population of prison by a large percent. This could bring prison incarceration to numbers near that of the eighties or even seventies. We need to get incarceration under control. Since the 1970's incarceration has risen over 200% by a lot. Those numbers should be our goal.