



Testimony Submitted to Maine Legislature, Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, on LD 178, "An Act to Support Reentry and Reintegration into the Community"

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Thank you for the opportunity testify in support of LD 178. My name is Frederic Reamer. I received my Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. I am a professor in the School of Social Work, Rhode Island College. I served on the State of Rhode Island Parole Board for 24 years. In addition to my service on the Rhode Island Parole Board, I have conducted extensive research on parole, criminal behavior, and the criminal justice system. I am the author of three books that are particularly relevant to my testimony:

- *On the Parole Board: Reflections on Crime, Justice, Redemption, and Justice* (Columbia University Press)
- *Heinous Crime: Cases, Causes, and Consequences* (Columbia University Press)
- *Criminal Lessons: Case Studies and Commentary on Crime and Justice* (Columbia University Press)

In my professional opinion, there are several key reasons to reestablish parole in Maine:

1. The vast majority of states offer the possibility of parole. Only a relatively small number of states have abolished or severely curtailed discretionary parole.
2. A prominent organization, *Right on Crime*, whose mission statement indicates that it seeks "conservative criminal justice reforms," recently examined the arguments for and against offering parole in the State of Florida and concluded: "Risk and cost analysis of re-instating parole deserves consideration, but the benefits of parole are far too great to ignore. A moderate reintroduction of parole is long overdue, and modifying Florida's

truth in sentencing thresholds, even gradually, will provide incentive for productive behavior and supervision.” See: <https://rightoncrime.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2022-06-ROC-AddressingFloridasParoleSystem-ChelseaMurphy-ROC-Version.pdf>

3. Reputable empirical research documents lower recidivism rates among parolees compared with offenders released on probation and those who complete their sentences without supervision.¹ Examples of empirical studies:
 - a. <https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Publications/CJB/2022-Report-Effect-of-parole-supervision-on-recidivism-CJB245.pdf>
 - b. <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/active-supervision-and-its-impact-upon-parolee-recidivism-rates>
4. In my experience, the prospect of a parole hearing provides a strong incentive for inmates to enroll in rehabilitative and educational programs designed to prevent crime and reduce recidivism. This increases public safety, especially among inmates whose risk factors are correlated with high recidivism rates (e.g., inmates with chronic and persistent substance use and mental health challenges, inmates with poor employment records, and inmates who consistently engage in what researchers and mental health practitioners refer to as “criminal thinking”).
5. My extensive anecdotal experience over more than a quarter century is that participation on parole increases the likelihood of leading a productive life (e.g., enhanced family and interpersonal relations, employment, self-discipline) because of life skills learned on parole and associated therapeutic gains.
6. Parole caseloads are typically smaller than probation caseloads, which increases the quality of supervision and contributes to public safety.
7. There is overwhelming empirical evidence that parole supervision is significantly less expensive than incarceration.

I conclude by strongly recommending passage of LD 178. Thank you very much.

¹ Some studies have yielded different results.