

John NLN
Warren
LD 178

Honorable Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

My name is John and I'm an incarcerated resident at the Maine State Prison. I've been incarcerated for over 15 years now and have over 35 years left to serve. I am writing to you today to show my absolute support for LD 178 and the effort to re-establish parole in Maine.

When I was arrested, I was 20 years old. I had no idea of what living a healthy and responsible life was at that age. At 20, I was young, irresponsible, impulsive, and I was actively hiding the faults of an inadequate young man behind an identity built from the distorted beliefs of what a man is supposed to be. At that age, I thought being the life of the party was the most important thing. I was careless towards my education and many opportunities that I was gifted with; and so, I squandered my life.

The reason I describe the mindset of a 20-year-old boy is because I've grown up. First, I have a much greater appreciation for the hurt and destruction I caused. I understand the recklessness of my thinking and actions. I want to prove that I am not the same man I was in that age of ignorance.

With that said, I can't take back my actions. I can't erase the pain or the loss, but I can grow. I can show that I've overcome my faults, my carelessness, my recklessness, my irresponsibility. That is the message I want to send today, that I, and many other incarcerated residents, are able to grow beyond the worst choice we ever made, and that through hard work we are able to change. I can make a difference in the lives of others, for myself, for my family, and for those who I've hurt. I wish to be an example of redemption.

It is my hope that parole can be the incentive for incarcerated residents to work on growing beyond the limitations of their past. And for those like me who were arrested when they were young, it is a chance to not only get their life back, but to prove that they are a changed person and not defined by the worst choice they ever made. Parole can be more than just an opportunity for freedom; it can be an opportunity for applied growth and atonement. It can validate a person's chance of living a successful life beyond prison by measuring the individual's growth while in prison. I believe parole can offer the incentive that not only reinforces the individual's success, but it can also reinforce the successful reform of the Maine department of corrections as a whole.