

Pedro Santiago  
Warren  
LD 178

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

My name is Pedro E. Santiago and I am a resident of Maine State Prison.

I am writing to you today to show my absolute support for LD 178 and the effort to re-establish parole in Maine.

With respect to public safety matters, I'm writing in support of parole because it is best to monitor a violent convicted offender upon their release. Most people are surprised to find out that parole has been abolished since 1976. But the parole and probation office still exists, and of the only few that are still afforded a parole hearing, only one was accepted and the others have passed away. It has been 47 years since parole has been abolished. But parolees from other states may be paroled to Maine.

Citizens from Maine are not afforded the same rights that other citizens in our country are afforded. How do we know that these individuals were case compliant in their own States before moving to Maine? Is it because other states' systems work better than our own? No, it's simply because these other states are actually using taxpayers' dollars to rehabilitate their offenders to become productive citizens before releasing them with rehabilitation, rather than rehabilitating and warehousing them, then releasing them once they're done serving their time.

Being eligible for parole does not mean that you get parole. It must be earned. Parole will give individuals hope and the driving force to educate themselves to become a productive citizen in the society they will be released to one day. It is a way to be sure that a convicted offender has been case compliant with their rehabilitation plan during their incarceration. Parole serves as a stepping stone. People who are not afforded parole only leave prison institutionalized and become burdens to society.

Never knowing, or losing a sense of responsibility, by being fed and clothed for years on end, does not correct the problem; it only creates institutionalization. Having a parole officer will relieve this problem by making sure a person has paid their fair share into their social security income (SSI) by working and making an honest living. As it stands right now, a person will be afforded SSI regardless of whether or not they paid their fair share into our SSI system.

With technology these days, a person can be closely monitored by a parole officer that will make sure that a person on parole is capable of being a productive citizen of the society they are in. A rule can also be implemented where an individual must have a cell phone on them at all times, always charged, so their parole officer can track their every move to see if they are where they say they are. Having parole will save the state money not only in feeding, clothing, and housing an offender, but also have the parolee pay child support, or get back to their family to help with all the problems life has to offer. The funds that will be saved may be allocated into other parts of the state that need funding. Like housing, education, and vocational development.