

Tony Locklear  
Warren  
LD 178

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

My name is Tony Locklear 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.

Parole might be the most important part of prison for an inmate, resident, or convict. Has always been labeled here on the outside. Let's just look at the fact of prison. The longer a person is in, sure there is schooling, physical education, but the aspect of cell or life with another man mentally dismantles a man's character. To teach business class, shop classes, also teaching classes along with spiritual groups religion, gardening, dog training, mentorship classes.

This is why parole must be now. Look outside at kids, young men, young women are dying. Businesses are lacking workers to fill positions. All these classes that DOC stands by have and are being looked at as a joke. Some men never grew up or had time to get things together outside these walls until the last seven or eight years.

Maine State Prison could be and should be a beacon of hope, not depression. DOC should replace mental health workers with parole officers which would be more effective in the communities, families, businesses. The prison prides itself on helping residents to become members of society but never lets them be members of society. Members of the House and Senate, this is the outcome of helping your communities. This comes from a man doing two life sentences. Parole would be a change for young people now.

I have seen tours come through this prison with just the warden walking them. That should send a message to everyone in Augusta what time it is. If parole would be brought back, 99% of residents are going home to their communities that you represent, representatives and senators. The families that support you to make decisions for them and their kids. Everyone that sits in those seats have all committed crimes. They may have been speeding tickets, driving while impaired after dinner, but all of you have made a mistake. Parole is such an asset! What legacy will you in the state house leave behind? To bring back parole would send a message to all states that this is the right move to benefit Maine.

There are farms that need help, cities, towns that could be a part of this parole. Everyone here at the prison has proven they are ready for these changes in their life. The easiest thing to do is to close a door. The hardest is to open more than you close. What part of history will DOC and Augusta be a part of?

There's room in every prison here that could be used as parole check-in points where residents would have to report on Friday nights or Saturday mornings to report and leave Sunday at 9:00 p.m. to go home to family for another week for the first 6 months, then report locally for the remainder of their sentence. Thank you.

Respectfully,  
Tony Locklear