

3/9/2023

Testimony in SUPPORT of Bill 178

Dear members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee:

I am Jeffrey Russ Gorman, DOC #46863. I am now 43 years old. I have been in the Maine State Prison for the past *twenty-two years*. I was 21 back in 2001. I told my two-year-old little daughter, "I love you baby" as I'm getting ready to go out with some friends to have fun. I bumped into this guy that had *acid*, it was cheap and a bunch of us decided to trip that night. I ended up meeting someone that night and I started to trip hard and lose control of my mind. I remember bits and pieces of the *nightmare*; I shot and killed my victim. I remember driving back to the party house and laying on a sofa as my mind played tricks on me. The hours pass and the trip starts to fade away, but I'm left with this feeling that something bad really happened. I got into my car and drove to the place this happened. I start walking peeking around the bend of the trees. I see the nightmare is real. I started to panic and didn't know what to do. I was now someone considered evil. I felt evil. I told my mother and left the state. I was quickly arrested.

I have spent the first 10 years of my 60-year sentence wasting away doing nothing, always with the thoughts of "I'm evil and not meant for this world." I wanted to end my life so many times. I still struggle with wanting this to end. I started doing programs and after 19 years of no contact with my daughter, finally, my baby is back in my life. I now have a reason to live. I want to be a good father. I've begged God for forgiveness, and I wrote the family of my victim over 10 years ago begging for forgiveness, I never knew if they received it even though I gave it to a caseworker. I have changed since my crime; I am no longer this broken, evil young man. I never meant to hurt anyone. I have grown, and I am a good person.

I can be a good father, son, and brother. I can be a great member of society as well. I just need a second chance. Parole could give me a second chance to prove I'm a good man and would never hurt anyone else, ever, in my life.

I have done so many programs. I am now in college, and I plan on getting my master's degree. I am also a service dog trainer. I have trained or helped train 4 different dogs that have ended up with a wounded war veteran. We take 3-month-old puppies and train them daily for seventeen months to do basic commands from sitting to the most complex commands, such as opening doors. These dogs end up with the men and women that have fought for this country and have been wounded doing so. I feel such self-worth and happiness doing this for people who need it. I just received the first puppy that is mine from start to finish. His name is Rocky. He is a yellow lab that came to me at twenty-eight pounds, he is now thirty-seven point-four pounds of pure love. This has changed me so much; it has filled my heart with love and compassion. I wish I could go back and change the past, but I can't. All I can do is be a good man and show who I really am to the world.

This state hasn't had *parole* since 1976. It's time for a change. I would happily wear an *ankle bracelet* and *GPS* for the rest of my life. I won't mess this opportunity up ever. I just want to have

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some years left with my mother and my daughter; I have a lot to prove. I can be a productive part of society for the rest of my life. Parole would give hope where there is only darkness. People with hope can become great people. We aren't all evil people to be kept in a box forever. I did something so evil *twenty-two years* ago. I'm so sorry for that. With this legislation, I have the chance to be the father I want to be and show the world I'm a good person. I owe it to her to be a good father and show her I'm a good person. I have a lot to prove. Please bring hope back to many families. Please don't let my past keep you from bringing parole back. I have a lot of good to do.

Respectfully,
Jeffrey Russ Gorman
Maine State Prison