

March 12th, 2023

Dear Members of the Maine Criminal Justice Committee,

I currently serve as the Director of Community Justice Programs for Volunteers of America (VOA) Northern New England and have worked with VOA for nine years, holding various positions at The Maine Coastal Regional Reentry Center in Belfast, Maine. Serving as Program Manager for several years prior to my current role. I have also held various professional licenses over the years, including as a Substance Use Counselor, Social Worker and as a Mental Health Rehabilitation Technician, working at various types of treatment centers, including, a methadone clinic here in Maine, a suboxone clinic and abstinence-based treatment center in the state of Kansas. While in Kansas, I served as the Senate Bill 123 (SB123) Liaison between the treatment center and community corrections. SB123 was a program for first time drug felons, being given an opportunity to have no felony charge on their record, with a successful completion of treatment. I was the treatment provider to these individuals at the treatment center where I worked. While there, I was also awarded *Excellence in Solutions*, being one of the first trained in the state's pilot project of Recovery Coaching, over a decade ago. The award came when I implemented a coaching program at the facility at which I worked. As program manager at the reentry center, I was trained in Moral Injury, Non-Violent Communication and Restorative Practices. I also work closely with local law enforcement agencies in my current professional work, on offering these types of program components to participants. I am accomplished Grant Writer, and through writing grants as part of my current role with VOA, have helped law enforcement agencies to implement initiatives such as Medicated Assisted Treatment, Recovery Coach Programs, Diversion & Deflection Programs, and the opening of their new community-based reentry services offices in downtown Belfast and Rockland, which are focused on no cost services to those returning to Waldo County and Knox County, after a period of incarceration. It is important for me to share my professional experience, as I have seen firsthand how successful reentry into communities for individuals, after lengthy periods of incarceration is not only possible, but these individuals become productive members of society, but contributing to their communities as citizens and as advocates for criminal justice reform.


Today, I am writing personally in support of LD 178, An Act to Support Reentry and Reintegration into the Community. This bill would reinstate parole in Maine, a critical step in ensuring that individuals who have worked hard to rehabilitate and transform their lives, would have the opportunity to rejoin society as productive, contributing members of society.

There are so many reasons to support this bill. Economic arguments for why reinstating parole makes sense, the rehabilitative arguments and the small way reinstating parole will address rates of over-incarceration of Black and Brown people in Maine.

Parole just makes sense. Every person deserves dignity, the opportunity to repair harm, better themselves and create meaningful purpose in their lives surrounded by their community, loved ones, children and family.

Reinstating parole is an important step toward investing in our Maine communities to make us strong, resilient and connected. Beyond reinstating parole, I hope Maine will establish a fair, transparent and rigorous parole system.

Sincerely,



Robyn Goff

Maine Community Member