

March 13th, 2023

State of Maine
Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee (CJPS)

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to testify before the committee asking to kindly reconsider bringing back the parole for the state of Maine. I am a foreigner, with permanent residence in the United States and have lived in the United States for over 5 years now. I came to this country as a result of my work as a Human Resources Director, with the confidence I can raise my children and offer a better life for my family here than in my home country Venezuela. Two years and a half ago I was surprised to meet an inmate from the Maine Prison in my master's in science at Life University that was held primarily online, Mr. Steven Matthew Clark. Since that very first day I was impressed by his introduction, he asked the class not to judge him based on the worst mistake he made in his life. Mr. Steven Clark has been incarcerated for over 18 years now, and over that period he has taken full accountability for the crime he committed, and has worked very hard to transform his life not only that, he has supported many people within the system and more recently he is leading an initiative bringing leaders, personalities, and organizations to foster a criminal justice transformation where restoration as opposed to punishment leads to a better society with less crime and suffer.

I am writing respectfully to the committee to consider bringing back the parole because I am convinced someone like Mr. Steven Clark spent enough time to reflect, and recover, he has helped so many people while incarcerated and can be even more helpful under parole in the future if an opportunity was given to him. I trust proper mechanisms would be in place to ensure, when, how, and who could be eligible to enjoy such privilege and equally there would be guardrails to ensure that anyone who breaks rules will return to prison. I also know because of the work Mr. Clark leads inspired me to learn about the system that the prison in Maine State at present is very progressive and offers many programs for inmates for them to develop and grow while in prison and so the parole will be very aligned to those efforts.

Finally, coming from a third-world country in Latin America I really dream criminal justice in the United States could offer more dignity to its citizens even when they have failed and offer an opportunity for them to pay a sentence in prison, with the possibility of parole or early release if they earn them based on merits, in due course. This country that today is my home is a first-world one and should be one of the best when it comes to best practices in criminal justice.

Sincerely,



Karina Delgado Rios