

James Hoch
Mary Hoch Foundation
LD 178

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

My name is James Hoch and I am writing to you today to show my full support for LD 178 and the effort to re-establish parole in Maine. I am a Partner at a Manhattan-based investment fund called Tailwind Capital which manages \$3.7 billion USD in committed capital in 50+ platform companies. Our family has for three generations spent summers in a small cabin on a lake in Cumberland County with my extended family.

I am participating in this hearing, because the lack of a parole mechanism excludes a very significant part of a functional criminal justice system. We have clear evidence of that around the United States and worldwide. Retributive justice may have previously been viewed as redemptive, but in practice it leaves even the victims unhealed and hurt.

Recently I established the Mary Hoch Foundation to honor the memory of my wife Mary, who died accidentally in 2016. Mary was very involved and on Consistory at our church in Bronxville New York, the Reformed Church of Bronxville which established the Coming Home program there. This 26-week program aimed to assist those who had been released from prison to integrate back into society. The participants met on a weekly basis for mutual dinners with community members discussing daily challenges and helping to resolve any possible issues. Church continues to assist in these efforts working with a women's home for recently released women.

The mindset of alienating those who are jailed comes back only to hurt our society and communities. A view that someone who has done wrong can't change is also inherently un-Christian. In fact, restorative justice is much more effective in transforming both individuals, healing communities and providing justice to victims that doesn't leave them alone with trauma and agony, but actually steps into healing – if possible – what was broken.

The Mary Hoch Foundation funds Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation at the Carter School in George Mason University. They are studying how much more transformative processes and societies become when they are healing-centered. We also founded Think Peace Learning and Support Hub, which helps to design truth and reconciliation processes. Last winter our team tailored a transitional justice course just for Maine together with Speaker of the State House Talbot-Ross.

Leo Hylton, currently serving a 50-year sentence in Maine facilitated this course. I cannot think of anyone else who better represents the transformation one can go through when supported by restorative justice. Returning the opportunity for parole will empower many more like Leo to change. Restorative justice also includes an invitation for those who have been hurt to move beyond a mindset of revenge, which can trap our minds in its darkest places. People like Leo pose no threat to their outside communities and should be afforded an opportunity to facilitate healing, especially in the communities where they caused harm.

It is for these reasons and more that I ask you to pass LD 178 into law.

Respectfully yours,
James Hoch