

Kitty Hartford
Boothbay Harbor
LD 178

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

My name is Kitty (Kathryn) Hartford and I am a resident of Boothbay Harbor. I am a retired Realtor, a great-grandmother, and have been an activist in areas of civil rights, peace, and justice for over 50 years, following in the footsteps of my Quaker grandparents.

Parole became a personal issue when my sister was murdered in 1982, and then later when my husband, my niece, and my grandson were incarcerated for substance abuse-related crimes. I didn't always favor parole, but I do now.

Since joining the Restorative Justice Project-Maine and learning about alternatives to our current punitive criminal justice system, I now have hope that my loved ones may receive the help they need and will be prepared to re-enter society, rejoin their families, and become productive members of our communities.

I will no longer be afraid of inmates being released having developed no skills other than becoming better criminals. I will no longer resent paying taxes to warehouse, house, feed, and clothe thousands of men, women, and juveniles who are given little or no form of rehabilitation. I will no longer wish I wasn't embarrassed about the way we treat our fellow human beings.

Like the Ubuntu philosophy of the indigenous people of South Africa, I believe that a person's humanity is dependent on the preservation and affirmation of the community's humanity. Maine can once again be a leader in the right direction, and we can proudly proclaim, "As Maine goes, so goes the Nation!"

That's my story, edited and gnashed over, and I'm sticking to it.

Many thanks for all that you do.

Best regards,

Kitty Hartford
Boothbay Harbor