

March 12, 2023

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

My name is Johanna Franzel and I am a resident of Cape Elizabeth.

I am writing to you today to show my support for LD 178 and the effort to re-establish parole in Maine.

From 2006-2012, I worked at the Long Creek Youth Development Center, teaching documentary radio to young people incarcerated there. I came to know the students and their stories well.

Many of them came from legacies of trauma and poverty; they had few resources to support a different path forward. I often wondered how their lives might have been changed if they had been mentored by system-impacted folks who could model rehabilitation, support, and understanding accountability.

At the adult level, this model of second chances seems to be only partially realized. While the Maine DOC has made educational and training programs available to prisoners, without parole, these aren't paired with the promise of a new life outside; there's little motivation to do the hard work of transformation.

If our justice systems reflected real belief in second chances, how might the adult prison population shift? And in turn, how might this shift change the legacies of younger generations? Our system is deeply entrenched in punishment. I think there's room to include repair.

Thank you for your work and for considering my opinion. I hope I can count on your support for LD 178.

Sincerely,

Johanna Franzel

Cape Elizabeth, Maine