

## Testimony in Support of “LD 178: An Act to Support Reentry and Reintegration into the Community”

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

My name is Claire Horne and I am a resident of Appleton, Maine. I have been a resident of Maine for the past 25 years. Today, I am writing to you to voice my support for “LD 178: An Act to Support Reentry and Reintegration into the Community.”

Parole is one avenue that can support reentry into our communities and help individuals to access resources to support effective, long-term rehabilitation. Incarceration rips individuals from their families and their community, creating many additional ripples of harm for those connected to the incarcerated person. Incarceration causes trauma and myriad long-term effects in people in prisons. The opportunity of parole can allow incarcerated parents to be with their children, and allow incarcerated individuals to contribute to their communities. Supported reentry, enabled by parole, is shown to be much more successful than unsupported release. LD 178 makes these opportunities possible for incarcerated Mainers and their communities.

Another opportunity parole provides is the chance for our state to address the despicable racial disparities in the Maine justice system. There is a vast racial disparity in arrests and sentencing in Maine. Statistics show that Maine is the fifth worst in the nation when it comes to racial disparities in prisons, with a 9:1 ratio of black/white adult prison residents. This is twice the national average. While I knew there was a disparity, I was appalled to learn these damning numbers. Restoring parole could provide a way to redress these disparities in arrests and sentencing.

Further, I believe everyone deserves a chance to be part of healing the wounds that are inflicted by incarceration, to individuals, families, and entire communities. Crime survivors have reported wanting rehabilitation over punishment for those who harmed them by a 2 to 1 margin. By creating a victim-sensitive parole system, LD 178 supports communities in healing from harm.

Thank you for all your work on the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, and for considering my testimony. I hope you will also support LD 178 and help begin the process to reestablish parole in Maine.

Sincerely,  
Claire Horne

Claire Horne  
Appleton  
LD 178

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