

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

My name is Faraha Akhtar and I am a resident of Toronto, Canada. I have been a software engineer since 2012 after I graduated with Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering from Bhubaneswar (India) I am an Indian citizen.

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

I am voicing my support for LD 178 - **An Act to Support Re-entry and Reintegration into the Community**. This bill is very personal to me and the rest of my extended family as this gives us some hope for one of our beloved family members who committed a serious crime more than 25 years ago.

I am writing to you sincerely hoping that I can draw your attention to the following:

It is my humble opinion that RE-STABLISHING parole in Maine will be a very good step in the right direction. It is important to note that LD 178 has significant safeguards to protect the public as well as recognized law enforcement and reformative purposes. I strongly believe that LD 178 will be POSITIVE for Maine, and neither the safety of society nor the legislative, penological or penal objectives could be compromised. I recommend that LD 178 add the requirement: "An inmate who satisfies all criteria for parole eligibility could be paroled even though He or She was subject to an immigration and naturalization service detainer". I believe that states like Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska and New Jersey, to name a few, have provisions which allow the Parole Board to "Grant a parole to a federal immigration detainer in order that the offender may be deported to the country of citizenship" IDAHO, IDAPA 50.01.01.250 (07) (b) (i).

I would like to draw your kind attention to the case of NADIM HAQUE (my cousin), a citizen of India, who was convicted of a murder in 1996 and sentenced to 50 years of prison term in Maine penitentiary. He has already served over 25 years of his sentence. I know that the crime committed was very serious and the loss experienced by the family of the deceased cannot be described in words. I would still request to show him mercy and gift him a second chance.

Nadim Haque belongs to a simple middle-class family in India. I am pleading to give him a second chance because his family needs him now more than ever. His parents are getting older (more than 80 years old). His younger sister (who was living with their parents) was battling

with cancer for a long time, she got paralysed few years back and finally succumbed to her illness last December. This has given a big emotional blow to Nadim Haque's parents. They have yet to recover from this tragedy. Nadim Haque's presence with them (in India on parole under LD 178) will make life easier for them and repair, to some extent, the damages done by destiny / circumstances.

Sometime back, his father, who is 80 + years old, was also diagnosed with DEMENTIA. His mother has been suffering from Arthritis, other old age diseases and from Covid19 (in recent past). The family is in complete distress. His family needs their son more than ever.

While in Maine Prison, Nadim Haque has been very active & concerned about the problems facing the prison. He has contributed to the Prison & outside community and tried to make qualitative improvement where ever possible. Some of his contributions are

- Mentoring prisoners in education & vocational training
- Peer educator
- Substance use recovery Coach

LD178 has given hope to us. Kindly show MERCY upon Nadim Haque, FORGIVE him and GIFT him a second chance so that he is granted parole and deported to India and take care of his suffering family before it is too late.

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

Kind Regards,

Faraha Akhtar

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