



March 11, 2023

LD 178 – “An Act To Support Reentry and Reintegration into the Community”

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Bruce Noddin, and I am the Executive Director of The Maine Prisoner Re-Entry Network or MPRN, a state-wide non-profit focused on providing peer support and coordinated community resources for hundreds of individuals returning to Maine communities from prison, jail, and treatment courts. I was also appointed to the State Workforce Board by Governor Mills and the Maine Recovery Council by Senator Jackson, in 2022.

I am writing in support of LD 178 - An Act To Support Reentry and Reintegration into the Community.

In recent years the Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) has provided a wide variety of life changing training, hands on, and educational opportunities for residents within MDOC facilities. Many of the men and women who have taken advantage of these tremendous opportunities are back in our communities, making incredibly positive contributions to their towns, cities, and neighborhoods. Unfortunately, though, many more are receiving life changing training, education, and hands on experience, but our Maine communities will never see the community changing benefits. Why? Because these folks will either never leave MDOC custody or will be too old to contribute.

LD 178 seeks to change that trajectory. The rippling impact of one returning citizen can change whole communities. In our work with MPRN we've witnessed firsthand, the change one person can make as a dedicated employee, family member, and contributing member of society. We've seen the positive ripple effect this has on others who are in the criminal justice system and on those whose behaviors may lead to criminal involvement.

As the co-founder of Rose's Room, a support group for family and loved ones of incarcerated individuals, and a father of son who is currently incarcerated, I need to bring up the word hope. Hope is the motivator for the families of the incarcerated, for incarcerated individuals, and for communities who support them. Hope is the reason for getting up in the morning and doing the next right thing to advance your life. Imagine having no hope.

LD 178 restores the hope of families, individuals, and communities. Hope that we can accomplish great things. Hope that we can give back to our communities. Hope that we can be reunited with our loved ones. Hope that we can break the cycle of incarceration and be of assistance to our fellow community members.

Beyond all of the personal benefits, of LD 178, are the practical benefits. Well trained and educated folks will enhance our depleted workforce, families will have positive, engaged parents back in their lives, communities will benefit from the income potential and contributions to the local economy, and many will be role models to prove that there are alternatives to lifestyles that lead to incarceration. Lastly these folks will be paying taxes and no longer be a drain on state resources. I hope the committee will consider recommending that LD 178, ought to pass.

Thank you!

Bruce Noddin, Executive Director, Maine Prisoner Re-Entry Network (MPRN)