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

As a resident of Knox County and a licensed master of social work (LMSW) in the state of Maine, I am requesting your consideration and support for LD 1633 - An Act to Establish a Community-based Reentry Program in All Department of Corrections Facilities. I am a PhD student and part-time faculty at the University of Maine, Orono, where I have spent the last three years focusing on policy and services related to reentry.

The Maine Department of Corrections take seriously their role in the management of correctional facilities, and their responsibility to support incarcerated citizens as they return to Maine cities, towns and neighborhoods following their release. LD 1633 is an important step toward helping them do that by addressing reentry challenges with competence and care in order to improve outcomes for returning Mainers.

Incarcerated citizens preparing for return to communities in Maine need access to support with multiple dimensions of sustainable life, including employment, housing, family engagement, access to healthcare and mental health resources, and treatment for substance use. LD 1633 wisely places knowledgeable, supportive individuals within the correctional landscape both in facilities and after release. This approach has the potential to provide significant improvement in the arc of a citizen's reentry journey. This legislation will allow returning citizens to receive the support and structure they need in their reentry process which will improve their chances of making successful transitions back into our communities.

Recidivism rates are unacceptably high in Maine. This bill provides the first example of a comprehensive safety net for returning citizens during a crucial phase of their return. The intervention with individuals who will opt into these services well before their release is an essential element of this programming. The support of the Department of Corrections gives us a reason to believe that a program like this can have a demonstrable effect on recidivism outcomes in Maine. Supporting LD 1633 will make successful reentry a priority and perhaps even save some money in the MDOC's budget in the process. Thanks for your dedication and for all of the work you continue to do to make our communities stronger.

Thank you for reviewing my letter to support LD 1633.

Sincerely,

Amy Frankel
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