



Restorative Justice Project Maine

21 April 2023

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Dr. Tim Hughes, and I am writing in support of LD 1633, "An Act to Establish a Community-based Reentry Program in All Department of Corrections Facilities."

I have been a family physician in Belfast for over 40 years. Before retiring in 2021, I was co-director of a regional substance use treatment program, and subsequently have been increasingly involved with the Restorative Justice Project Maine. In both substance use and restorative justice work I have had the privilege to become acquainted with the Maine Coastal Regional Reentry Center (MCRRC) in Belfast. It should be a treasured institution that we use as a model to institute across the state. I have seen it provide many correctional facility residents preparation to literally survive, and often thrive, in their newly liberated state.

Reentry centers are good for the wider communities they serve, too. In a 2015 study of MCRRC, recidivism rates were approximately half of a nationwide average (from 67.8% recidivation rate within 3 years in a 2014 BJS study, 2014, to 31% at MCRRC). MCRRC residents also contribute thousands of dollars to our community through community service and the gift of food grown on their community farm.

If the department of corrections is true to its mission ("Making our communities safer by reducing harm through supportive intervention, empowering change and restoring lives"), priority must be given to reentry. Restorative Justice Project Maine urges you to support LD 1633.

Sincerely,

Tim Hughes, MD
Board member and Legislative Committee Co-Chair, Restorative Justice Project Maine
Belfast, Maine

Restorative Justice Project

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LD 1633

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