

To: The Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

From: Jane Herbert, 14 High Street, Damariscotta, Maine 04543

Re: Support for LD 1633, An Act to establish a community-based reentry program for all Department of Corrections Facilities.

Sponsor: Sen. Beebe-Center of Knox

Co-sponsor: Rep. Geiger of Rockland

When refugees come to our shores our society digs in to help them acclimate to life in America. Why then, do we release a person who has served their time in prison without acclimating them to a healthy lifestyle in our State? The hurdles refugees face are immense; trauma, poverty, language skills, education and employment challenges. Formerly incarcerated people face many of these same issues.

The successful pilot program in Belfast, Maine has proven the value of integrating formerly incarcerated individuals with positive community experiences. The outcomes of such programs are of value financially for the state, socially for the local communities and personally for the formerly incarcerated.

There is a ground swell of understanding on the national level of the need for change in the way we have historically handled crime and incarceration. LD 1633 will put Maine on the forefront of progress and be a model for others.

I hope you will support LD 1633.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely, Jane Herbert
Damariscotta, Maine 04543