

Good Afternoon, Chair Tipping, Chair Roeder and members of the Labor and Housing Committee...

I would have been there in person, but I just couldn't get this busy time off from work. My name is Jessica Dudley, I'm 31 years old and was just recently released from the Southern Maine women's re-entry center in December 2023. I saw that a class was being offered for a pre-apprenticeship program for the laborers union in May 2023, so I decided to sign up and looking back at it right now that decision and that program was one of the best things that had happened to me during my 24 months of incarceration, shortly after that there was an internship for a welding class offered by PIW in June 2023 that I signed up for as well; between the training/ certifications and knowledge that I received from both those programs they landed me a high demand paying job and down an amazing career path and with only a little bit of extra push from myself almost immediately upon my release. I now have a job as a welder and fabricator of Efficient Air Systems which I absolutely love! As important as it is I can say I feel very confident and more secure with my present and now my future. I'm very thankful that these programs were offered at the reentry center, I can't say where I would be or what I would be doing in this moment, but I can guarantee I wouldn't be as good off as I am right now. I absolutely cannot stress enough on how important and beneficial I feel these programs are and how appreciated and needed they are as well. One of my biggest worries while I was incarcerated was wondering what I was going to do for a job and money upon my release, this was my second time incarcerated, my first experience there was 7 years ago and I still have had a hard time finding a decent job, I wish these types of programs existed my last time incarcerated, one thing needed more than anything upon release is stability, and this program was a huge step towards that.

Jessica Dudley
Portland
LD 2280

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