

Testimony in support of LD 1335
to the Committee on Judiciary
March 31, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Johnson and I am a resident of Sanford.

I am writing in support of LD 1335, An Act to Prohibit Life Sentences.

The growth of the Second Look Movement to review past harsh sentencing policies shows us that we should be reforming those policies. [A 2025 report by The Sentencing Project](#) on the review process notes “[In 2017, the American Law Institute \(ALI\)](#) – an independent organization composed of judges, lawyers, and law professors – recommended that states adopt a second look judicial sentence review process after 15 years of imprisonment. In adopting the 10-year second look recommendation, the ALI stated: [The second look recommendation] is rooted in the belief that governments should be especially cautious in the use of their powers when imposing penalties that deprive offenders of their liberty for a substantial portion of their adult lives. ***The provision reflects a profound sense of humility that ought to operate when punishments are imposed that will reach nearly a generation into the future, or longer still.*** A second-look mechanism is meant to ensure that these sanctions remain intelligible and justifiable at a point in time far distant from their original imposition.”

The Sentencing Project report also notes that “research has established that [lengthy sentences do not have a significant deterrent effect on crime](#) and divert resources from effective public safety programs.” They also note what we are aware of, which is the rising costs of an aging incarcerated population.

A life sentence denies hope and removes all motivation for personal rehabilitation. A life sentence is simply punitive.

I hope that Maine is a community that wants to foster hope instead. That believes in family and community reintegration, and that understands that a life sentence fails to consider any possibility of personal responsibility and rehabilitation. I hope you will support Maine LD 1335.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson, Sanford, Maine.

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/the-second-look-movement-a-review-of-the-nations-sentence-review-laws/>

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/app/uploads/2023/02/Counting-Down-Paths-to-20-Year-Maximum-Prison-Sentence.pdf>