



TESTIMONY ON LD 1335

An Act to Prohibit Life Sentences

**Judiciary Committee Hearing
March 31, 2025**

IN SUPPORT

Submitted by: [Dr. Brashani Reece](#)

Dear Chairperson Carney, Chairperson Kuhn, and Esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Dr. Brashani Reece, and I am the Executive Director of Drop LWOP New England. I am here to express my support for LD 1335.

I wear two hats in this situation: On the one hand, I hold a doctorate in forensic psychology, where I have studied violence and dangerousness for the last decade. On the other hand, I am a survivor of attempted murder.

It's the kind of story that can be quite upsetting. I was attacked, put in a choke hold, dragged by my hair, and pistol-whipped. As I was losing consciousness, I saw my body in a river. The only reason I survived was because my assailant let me go.

Still, I did not want a life sentence for that person. I wanted him to be held accountable, and I wanted him to change. It turns out that I am not alone.

In the 2022 National Survey of Victims' Views on Safety & Justice their findings reveal:

- Two out of three survivors prefer shorter prison sentences and more spending on prevention and rehabilitation (60%) versus prison sentences that keep people in prison for as long as possible (26%).
- Survivors, by a margin of three to one (72% to 22%), prefer holding people accountable through options beyond just prison, such as rehabilitative programming, mental health treatment, and drug treatment.

- Three out of four survivors support granting sentence reductions to individuals who engage in rehabilitation, treatment, education, and job training, rather than mandating the completion of their full sentences as originally issued.¹

These results are consistent with my own personal experience of working with survivors who are searching for a type of healing that cannot be found through a lifetime of incarceration.

I have a sincere interest in helping people heal from violence while also ensuring that our communities remain safe. I am dedicated to the idea that only individuals who are ready for release are given that opportunity.

To that end, it is imperative to acknowledge that we incarcerate individuals well beyond what their actual level of risk would suggest is necessary.

Though I know that this bill is prospective, it is worth mentioning that Maine has 60 individuals who are elderly by incarceration standards, who have served life sentences. Those people, just by age and number of years they have served are statistically most likely the lowest risk to reoffend. And yet, they remain incarcerated. I can tell you from the research, this is not needed for public safety.

I kindly urge the Committee to vote in favor of LD 1335. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding these significant pieces of legislation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Brashani Reece

¹ NATIONAL SURVEY OF VICTIMS' VIEWS ON CRIME SURVIVORS SPEAK SAFETY AND JUSTICE. (2022).
<https://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Alliance-for-Safety-and-Justice-Crime-Survivors-Speak-September-2022.pdf>