

Taylor Taylor
Maine State Prison - Warren
LD 648

Honorable Senator Beebe-Center Representative Hasenfus, and Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee:

My name is Taylor and I am wiring in wholehearted support of LD 648 - An Act to Expand Supervised Community Confinement.

I am currently serving a de facto Life sentence at Maine State Prison for a crime I committed when I was between 18-26 years old. I did bad. I really hurt people, and for years I believed I deserved to die as a broken old man in prison. I hated myself for what I did for years and can't count the times I wanted to kill myself. A lot of times, the only thing that kept me from doing it was not wanting to break my Mom's heart again.

After being down for more than 15 years, I am finally at a point of seeing how much good I can do outside of prison. I feel stuck in here. I've done all the programs and I'm going to school to learn how to stop people from hurting each other. I can see how getting beat as a kid and shuffled through the foster system really messed me up.

I can see now how "hurt people hurt people." I did that and will never do it again. Now that I've grown up so much and learned so much, I want to help other hurt people to stop themselves from hurting other people. I can do that if you give me a chance.

One of the biggest things I've learned in the past 15 years is that people change over time. Yeah, some people come in and out of prison like it's their career. They're doing Life on the installment plan. But those are mostly short timers coming in and out for doing drugs or breaking a rule of their probation conditions. Most of the Longtimers I know are way different than they were when they were kids. A lot of us come in as kids (18-26 or younger) and grow into men. I look around and see guys in their 40s, 50s, and 60s (there's even one in his 80s!) who came in that young.

I don't want to be one of those old men when I know how much more good I could be doing on the outside of prison. And I'm not alone. A lot of these older men can do all the good I can do out there. More importantly, they really want to do good. We're ready. We want to do right by our families, do right by the people we hurt if we can, and be productive and helpful citizens. We know deep down that we screwed up our first shot at life. We know that. We did bad, but if you give us a chance to do right, we will.

There really isn't a big number of people who would actually meet the criteria for SCCP, so not a lot of people will actually be let out if you pass this bill. But for those who might have a chance, we're carpenters, barbers, recovery coaches, peer support workers, hospice volunteers, machinists, road workers, peacebuilders, tech support, and more. There is a lot of talent in here ready to get to work helping our families and communities out there if you let us.

Thank you for letting me share my words with you all. Please pass LD 648!