

Testimony in Support of LD 648

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

By Amy Hughes, Kittery Maine

Date: 4/21/2025

My name is Amy Hughes I am a resident of Kittery, Maine, and I'm writing to express my strong support for **LD 648 – An Act to Expand the Supervised Community Confinement Program (SCCP)**. This modest and sensible reform is grounded in science, economic responsibility, and our collective capacity for compassion and rehabilitation.

LD 648 proposes to make a simple, yet powerful change. This bill does not guarantee release—it merely allows for *evaluation* against the Department of Corrections' standard SCCP criteria. It keeps public safety in mind while expanding the opportunity for deserving individuals to earn a second chance. Research shows that human brain development, particularly in areas affecting judgment and impulse control, continues until about age 26. LD 648 reflects this reality by acknowledging that youth involved in serious crimes can and do change.

Maine has some of the harshest sentencing laws in the nation, and it eliminated parole nearly 50 years ago. Today, most people serve their full sentences behind bars without the classic rehabilitative incentive that parole once provided. Incarceration costs Maine an average of **\$117,000 per person per year**. Expanding SCCP responsibly reduces these costs by transitioning suitable individuals into supervised, community-based settings—where they can work, pay taxes, and support their families.

The crime rate among individuals over age 40 is significantly lower, and those who've maintained low custody classifications for five consecutive years have demonstrated sustained positive behavior. Transitioning them through SCCP provides a structured, supportive reentry path that reduces recidivism—unlike the abrupt “straight release” that currently sends people back into the world with no housing, no job, and no resources.

LD 648 gives people who have changed the opportunity to be evaluated—not automatically released—but simply to be considered. That chance can mean everything. LD 648 is not just smart policy—it is humane policy. It upholds public safety, respects developmental science, addresses fiscal concerns, and helps right a system that has long lacked meaningful mechanisms for redemption. I urge this committee to vote ought to pass on LD 648 and lead Maine toward a more just and restorative approach to corrections.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy Hughes

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Kittery, ME 03904

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