

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

My name is Dominic Sylvester of Warren, Maine. I write to you to express my strong support for LD 648, an act to expand the supervised community confinement program. My story is one of survival, resilience, and transformation.

I was ten days old when my maternal grandmother adopted me. At first, I had a home, a place where I thought I was safe. But when I was six or seven, her drinking began—heavy, unrelenting. And with it came the abuse. I tried to make sense of it, tried to believe that if I could just be better, be different, it would stop. But it never did.

As the harm escalated, my instincts kicked in. I fought back, not to hurt, but to survive. It only made things worse. Male relatives stepped in, reinforcing the cycle, claiming their discipline was justified. At sixteen, it all collapsed in one brutal, terrible event, which I regret to this day.

That morning led to my 27-year sentence.

Prison is its own kind of world, but I refused to let it define me. I took "The Challenge Program," and learned how to resolve conflict through reason instead of rage. I completed a Substance Abuse class and took control of my own healing. Now, I'm enrolling in the MSP Hospice Volunteer Program—to give my time and presence to those facing life's final chapter. I also volunteer, pushing wheelchair-bound individuals who need a hand.

Growth is my choice, and every day, I prove that change is possible. I model this for my peers because I know: circumstances do not make the person-choices do. My past does not define my future, and my story is one of rebuilding, of finding meaning, and of never giving up.