

**Testimony in support of LD 648**  
**the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
April 23, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Committee:

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

I am here to speak in support of LD 648, An Act to Expand the Supervised Community Confinement Program, and I am grateful to each Committee Member for listening to me today.

This testimony will speak to the individual, family, community and economic benefits that would be reaped by each additional person who could earn SCCP under the guidelines of LD648.

I had the great fortune to work in the education department of a women's prison from 2018-2022. A number of women in their late 30's and early 40's have earned their release on parole in the last 2 years after being incarcerated for up to 30 years. Despite challenges far too broad to describe here, they are thriving.

These women are excited to pay taxes, to contribute to the greater good, and to receive a helpful refund to spend locally. After years of being forced to purchase hygiene, clothing and other commissary products from overpriced national monopolies, they shop at a local thrift store or farmer's market, businesses owned by members of their churches, or NA and AA groups where they volunteer, or at a local computer repair shop.

Their refund purchased diapers for a first grandchild whose birth last year they were able to be at. Refunds earned from working as a water quality tester while training for her CDL certification, and now as a heavy equipment operator. From working as an assistant manager of a restaurant, an IT support technician, an office administrator while her employer trained her to be a diesel mechanic and gifted her with a purple toolbox on completion. Working full time as a Certified Peer Support Worker and nights and weekends as an extra for Netflix, all while redoing her aging parents basement washroom destroyed from a flood.

They are the lead media person for a non-profit, a caseworker for those on Social Security Disability, administrator for a state university medical outreach program, and certified insurance agent who had enough letters of support to be certified under special circumstances.

Nine women earned their parole 90 days early because of their 5+ year efforts to earn an AS or AAS degree. They did this while working full time in maintenance, the woodshop, correctional industries, education, the library, the kitchen, warehouse, or on overnight paint and wax crews.

They now have jobs that allow for a sick day to be able to bring a parent home from the hospital after a heart attack, or accompany them to chemotherapy treatments.

Their refunds allow them to treat grandchildren to ice-cream in the park, despite having to overcome the fear of walking through the open park gate. For years this was an anxiety ridden event. Each occurrence could result in being yelled at, cursed at, or worse, be written up and suspended from education and other programming because you crossed through without permission, or for being late to work because you didn't. There is no time to describe what integrity it requires to maintain years of 'clear conduct', or to process their realities like the panic of sensory overload in a store cereal aisle.

I did not know these women when they were the age that they committed their crimes. I know them now. I know their remorse, their rehabilitation, their commitment to family and community, their struggle, and what indescribable challenges they overcame to succeed. I am a better person for knowing them.

I hope you will support LD 648 and the empowering changes and community well being that will come from it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson  
Sanford, Maine.