

**Testimony in support of LD 1844**  
**the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
May 5, 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 writing in support of LD 1844, An Act to Expand the State's Workforce by Supporting the Transition from Incarceration to Employment.

LD 1844 notes critical skills needed for successful reentry, but does not define any requirement for every individual to have access to and complete the programming. This is concerning as there must be equal access for every person or we have not fulfilled our commitment to their success. I hope that ultimately this bill will be amended to require this programming for every person prior to release, with the exception perhaps of those already participating in work release or full time remote work programs should they choose not to participate.

Reentry programming for everyone is critical to the safety and success of the individual as well as the community.

We must ensure that everyone has the knowledge and skills to use modern technology (cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc). These are vital skills we all need to gain and maintain employment, connect to services, participate in general communication, perform financial transactions and management, be protected from internet crime or otherwise function with everyday tasks. We are setting our neighbors up to fail if we are not providing these programs to every individual before they reenter their community. Reentry programs also provide some of the socialization and team participation that every person deserves to have experience in as they prepare for release.

The success of reentering residents is our responsibility. The entire Maine community. We should ensure that the Department of Corrections has the funding and resources needed for everyone to complete the programming. This includes proper planning to include those in more restrictive housing units and those incarcerated for longer periods of time to begin this programming well in advance of their release date so that it may be completed successfully.

Maine is fortunate that it has entities such as the Department of Labor, as well as non profit community organizations that would be exceptional resources for developing and deploying this curriculum as well as assisting with connections to health care providers, social services providers, veterans services, housing, and other vocational and educational programming available on release. I hope you will support our neighbors re-entering their communities by supporting LD 1844, and by ensuring the critical programming they need is provided.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson, Sanford, Maine