

MAINE STATE PRISON BRANCH OF THE



N.A.A.C.P.



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Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee
State House Station 2
Augusta, Me 04333

May 5, 2025

Re: LD 648 “An Act to Expand Supervised Community Confinement”

Proposal: Reforming Maine’s Sentencing and Supervised Release System

I. Introduction

- **Overview of the Issue:** Maine’s sentencing policies, particularly the lack of parole and limited structured post-release supervision, create **financial burdens, public safety concerns, and constitutional disparities**.
- **Purpose of the Proposal:** To establish a more effective, evidence-based system that **balances rehabilitation, cost reduction, and community safety**.
- **Thesis Statement:** Implementing reforms—such as structured reentry, expanded SCCP eligibility, and improved post-release supervision—will **enhance public safety, reduce costs, and ensure justice is applied equitably**.

II. Background & Problem Statement

- **Harsh Sentencing & Lack of Parole:** Maine abolished parole in 1976, limiting options for **early release and structured reintegration**.
- **Limited Good Time Credits:** Strict limitations on good time credits result in unnecessarily prolonged incarceration for individuals who show rehabilitation potential.
- **Cost to Taxpayers:** Maine spends **\$115,000–\$117,000 per incarcerated individual annually**, compared to **\$40,000–\$50,000 for supervised community confinement**.
- **Reentry Challenges:** Maine ranks **last in reentry effectiveness**, highlighting the **urgent need for structured supervision upon release**.
- **Constitutional Disparities:** Individuals from other states can **transfer their parole to Maine**, but Maine citizens lack **parole opportunities**—leading to **unequal treatment under the Fourteenth Amendment**.

III. Proposed Policy Reforms

1. **Expand Eligibility for Supervised Community Confinement Program (SCCP)**
 - Individuals serving **25 years to life** should be eligible for SCCP after 20 years rather than 25 years.
 - Those with sentences **less than 25 years** should qualify based on demonstrated **rehabilitation** and earned good time.
2. **Establish Mandatory Post-Release Supervision for High-Risk Offenders**
 - Require structured **supervision, monitoring, and mental health services** for individuals convicted of violent crimes.
 - Create **individualized reintegration plans** to reduce recidivism.
3. **Increase Good Time Allowances for Eligible Individuals**
 - Expand good time eligibility for individuals convicted of **murder, domestic violence, and sexual assault** to incentivize rehabilitation.
 - Implement **earned time credit for educational programs, therapy, and job training**.
4. **Revise Sentencing Policies to Address Constitutional Disparities**
 - Ensure **Maine citizens receive equal parole access** as transferred parolees.
 - Apply **standardized eligibility criteria** for early release and supervision.
5. **Shift Corrections Resources to Prioritize Rehabilitation**
 - Reduce **overreliance on punitive incarceration** and allocate funding to **education, job training, and substance abuse programs**.
 - Conduct **independent audits** on correctional facility spending to prevent **misallocation of taxpayer dollars**.

IV. Expected Outcomes

- **Public Safety Improvement:** Reduced recidivism rates through structured reentry programs.
- **Taxpayer Savings:** Lower annual corrections spending by shifting from incarceration to supervised release.
- **Fair & Equitable Justice:** Eliminating disparities in parole eligibility ensures constitutional consistency.
- **Enhanced Rehabilitation:** Expanding SCCP and good time credits incentivizes rehabilitation and reintegration.

V. Implementation Strategy

- **Legislative Action:** Passage of **LD 468 or similar reforms** through bipartisan support.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Engagement with **law enforcement, prosecutors, corrections officials, and advocacy groups**.
- **Pilot Programs:** Initiate **small-scale SCCP expansion** to measure effectiveness before full implementation.
- **Funding Adjustments:** Redirect existing corrections funds to **community supervision programs**.

VI. Conclusion

- **Final Call to Action:** Reforming Maine's sentencing and supervised release policies will **improve public safety, reduce financial burdens, and align with evidence-based corrections models.**
- **Legislative Commitment:** Lawmakers must **prioritize rehabilitation, fairness, and cost-effectiveness** in the justice system.

Respectfully submitted,

Maine State Prison Branch of the NAACP