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LD 1941

My name is Marianna Tremaine of Augusta and I am writing in support of LD1941. I am testifying not just as a citizen but on behalf of my fiancé Andrew Freeman who is currently incarcerated at the Maine State Prison in Warren. I got to know Andrew as a classmate in an online college class we were enrolled in at the University of Maine at Augusta. Although I have not known Andrew for the majority of his incarceration or before it, I have come to know and love him for the person he has become since. In class he was helpful, seeking to connect with people, friendly and able to put his best work forward. I have witnessed firsthand his ability to interact cordially with other citizens in our community in a constructive manner. As an inmate who maintains years of good behavior, works a regular job on top of facilitating a partnership with Goodwill to help clothe discharging inmates, achieves high marks in his courses, maintains friendships and a relationship with me on the outside he has more than proved an example of rehabilitation inside this prison system. And there are many more examples of rehabilitated prisoners like him. Maine is the only state in New England without a parole system, Maine currently denies its incarcerated individuals the ability to prove that they are able to meet early release standards to reintegrate safely into society once reaching similar milestones of rehabilitation. Parole facilitates reintegration into society through a system of structure and support reducing problems from "cold releases" and related recidivism. For many the ability to qualify for parole would act as an incentive against poor behavior while in prison and a second chance at proving they have been rehabilitated before serving the maximum of certain long-term sentences. This not only boosts morale but alleviates taxpayer costs related with housing inmates for needlessly long sentences past rehabilitation reasons totaling around \$116,000 per inmate, annually. With parole implementation Andrew would be allowed back into the community on conditional release and allowed to integrate back into society under supervision, following rules and meeting standards to maintain his release with the guidance of a parole officer and support from his friends and family including the support of living with me with the newfound focus of being able to start a family and live a fulfilling life.