

Dear esteemed members of the Judiciary committee,

My name is Jenna Butler and I am writing today to urge you to recognize the importance of LD 1941: An Act to Implement Recommendations of the Commission to Examine Reestablishing Parole. I currently work within the criminology and sociology department at the University of Southern Maine, from which I also graduated from in 2023. My undergraduate studies were spent learning the ins and outs of rehabilitative justice, something that has since become very important to me. Maine's criminal justice system has been priding itself for years over the steps taken to work away from the punitive carceral system that the United States is so commonly known for. However, the lack of a parole system in Maine needs to be addressed if progress wants to continue to be made. Since 1976 when Maine became the first state to abolish parole, our prison population has increased with no meaningful way to support reentry after release. As a survivor of violent crime myself, I understand the many concerns about public safety that come with the prospect of letting people walk freely. However, statistics show that people are 36% less likely to reoffend when placed in a parole system after release as compared to being released with zero guidance and supervision. Parole serves a real purpose in the carceral system even just by telling offenders that their choices do not define them and support is there if they need it. Community support is a crime deterrent and reestablishing parole is just one of many ways we can keep Maine safe. I thank you for your time and your careful consideration of LD 1941.

Sincerely,

Jenna Butler
Portland, ME

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LD 1941

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