

Date: January 8 2026

Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, Representatives Miliken, Mathieson, Pluecker, Sargent, Sayre, Sinclair, Warren, Senators Beebe-Center and Talbot Ross,

My name is Richard Stahursky. I'm writing you in support of bringing back parole in Maine with LD 1941. This bill would give me hope which is something invaluable. The hope to go home to my fiancéé, the hope to have a family and rebuild my life up. I was given a life sentence for murder in Maine and in 2016 I was transferred from Maine to New Jersey.

I've been in solitary confinement now for 21 years with bouts in general population. 24 years incarcerated of which 21 years in Solitary Confinement has greatly affected my mental health. I have attempted suicide multiple times and I have a history of self-harm. In 2021 I got engaged to my fiancéé Arimela, who has shown me that I could be more than what society has labeled me. Before meeting her, I had no reason to stay out of trouble because shortly after coming to prison in 2002 on another charge, for which I was innocent of but I was convicted nonetheless, my only sister died, my mother died and my two sons back then were kept from me. I felt like the world had crumbled under my feet. I grew up in an extremely abusive household with my stepfather being a pedophile who sexually assaulted my sister for years.

In court my abusive childhood, my time in Solitary Confinement and my mental health were not taken into consideration when they sentenced me to life. A system that punishes trauma instead of healing us is detrimental to our communities and by extension our families.

I didn't have the guidance that I needed back then to become the man I am now. I left the abusive household at 11 years old, I was fending for myself on the streets. I tried to survive on the streets but it was brutal. I had two sons out of wedlock by the time I was 20 which in hindsight it affected their lives because I wasn't able to give them the stability they needed.

For the past 4 and a half years I have been trying to get into college to better myself. I obtained my High School Equivalency Diploma at the Maine State Prison in 2015. Parole would give me an opportunity to right some of my wrongs, to give back to the community and to finally be a provider for my fiancéé and our future family.

Currently, I'm not being given the tools to show that I have potential to be a changed man. At the New Jersey State Prison in Trenton they are not offering me access to a college education, or to other programs despite my fiancéé advocating for me.

When I look at myself in the mirror, I see a man who is eager to prove his worth but who is constantly met with obstacles along the path. I don't want to be defined by my charges. Maine abolished the death penalty but in reality it still exists under the form of a life sentence. A life sentence is death by incarceration. A life sentence has deprived me and others of the opportunity to ask for a second chance. Unconditional love and hope keep me going everyday. I know I cannot change the past but I'm asking for a chance to change my future. For these reasons I ask you to please vote Yes on Parole LD 1941.

Respectfully,

Richard Stahursky (Maine prisoner transferred to New Jersey)