



MAINE ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

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January 8, 2026

Senator Anne Carney, Chair
Representative Amy Kuhn, Chair
Judiciary Committee
5 State House Station, Room 438
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 1941: An Act to Implement Recommendations of the Commission to Examine Reestablishing Parole

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing on behalf of MACDL in support of LD 1941.

We abolished parole in 1976 in the interest of public safety. Since this change, there has been no improvement to public safety. So, we must ask ourselves, what is the purpose of incarceration in Maine? What role do we want incarceration to play in our state's future?

Maine's incarceration rate is 328 for every 100,000 people. To help with scale, the United Kingdom has an incarceration rate of 129 for every 100,000 people, Canada has a rate of 104 for every 100,000 people.

The world has changed significantly since 1976. For example, women couldn't open a bank account without a male co-signer until 1974, just two years prior to Maine abolishing parole. We have new and more robust data on incarceration rates and public safety. We have a better understanding of the type of folks that find themselves incarcerated and the role that race, sex, gender identity, and socioeconomic status plays in the likelihood of incarceration.

Maine is so small. Incarcerated folks aren't some nameless faceless "big bads". They are our neighbors, our friends, our family members who deserve to be reintegrated into our communities. Parole allows incarcerated folks to return to their communities with the supports necessary to be successful and avoid recidivism. Not only do they deserve reintegration, their friends, families, and communities deserve to have them back. Our local economies deserve to have their contributions. We deserve to not have our tax dollars pay for the incarceration of folks that are already rehabilitated. We are effectively throwing tax revenue, that is so desperately needed elsewhere, directly in the trash.

My husband is a born and raised resident of Munjoy Hill, but I'm from away. I grew up in Charlotte, NC, so coming to Maine was a bit of a culture shock to say the least. But something that immediately stuck out like a sore thumb to me was this deeply held belief that Mainers are, above all, practical. If it aint broke don't fix it. But if something *is* broken, you fix it. Our current system is broken. We need to fix it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'E' and 'L' followed by a surname.

Erika L. Connolly, Esq

Erika Connolly
Maine Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
LD 1941

Good morning Judiciary Committee members. I was present during the public hearing over Zoom. I intended to present my testimony to you but had not been reached by 5:10pm and I had a 5:00 appointment I needed to attend. I would love the opportunity to participate in the Work Session as well. I'm available if you have any questions.