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To: Judiciary Committee Members

Date: January 8, 2026

Fm: Joseph Jackson: MPAC Executive Director

Re: letter in support LD 1941 An Act to Implement Recommendations of the
Commission to Examine Reestablishing Parole

Senator Anne Carney

Representative Amy Kuhn

Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee

My name is Joseph Jackson, and I'm the Executive Director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC), and I am the Co-Executive Director of Maine Inside Out. I was a member of the commission to Examine Reestablishing Parole. I'm also a system-impacted individual who spent over 20 years in the Maine Department of Corrections. This past October I celebrated 12 years of freedom. It shouldn't be a secret that parole is something that I've been working on since I walked out the door. MPAC and MIO prioritize supporting system-impacted youth and adults in their struggle to overcome the barriers that have been erected because of a felony conviction.

As a member of the commission to Examine Reestablishing Parole. I attended every meeting. I listen to experts, researchers, academics, system-impacted people and victims of crime. The thing I got clear on is that parole isn't changing a person's sentence. The authority of the Department of Corrections is so vast it can have custody over people in the community.

I was part of a contingent of commission members who visited Maine State Prison and the Women's Center in Warren. During our visit men and women shared stories of starting their incarceration as youth, with a handful naming their crimes that were committed when they were in their teens and that they had spent more years incarcerated than their ages at the time of incarceration.

The men and women we met weren't a monolithic group, some were Democrats, some were Republicans. Parole wasn't a divisive issue for them. Parole offered hope, restoration, and redemption.

I favor reestablishing parole because I believe the Maine model of Corrections is incomplete with it. The Maine Department of Corrections is giving presentations about the Maine model of Corrections across this country, and it doesn't have the ability and authority to recognize and honor the transformational power of their own programming. Reestablishing parole simply expands their power of custody over individuals in the community to those not currently eligible for community custody.

Reestablishing parole is good for everyone. Parole is a tool considered best practice reentry transition back into the community. The process promotes rehabilitation and provides opportunities for returning citizens to contribute to their communities. Parole means fewer people will be damaged by the long-term effects of imprisonment.

Lastly, reestablishing parole will reintroduce a structure that instills hope, and offers redemption. It will allow the Department of Corrections to live up to its mission of "...empowering change and restoring lives".

Thank you for your time and consideration!

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