

Erica King
Portland
LD 1923

January 12, 2026

TO: The Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
RE: Testimony In Support of LD 1923: An Act to Repurpose Long Creek Youth Development Center and Build a Community System of Support.
Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

My name is Erica King, and I am a resident of Portland speaking today in strong support of LD 1923. My name is Erica King, and I am a resident of Portland, Maine, a mother, a social worker, a national policy expert, and a colleague of some of Maine's most brilliant, formerly incarcerated youth and adults.

I move this support forward not only as a community member who has dedicated the last 20 years to applied research and systems improvement within both youth and adult justice systems. My public policy career has focused extensively on the specific needs of Maine's justice-involved populations, including:

- Evidence-Based Alternatives: Researching the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices in rural juvenile justice systems.
- Youth Recidivism and Diversion: Analyzing the pathways from diversion to discharge to improve positive youth outcomes.
- Community-Based Care: Developing asset mapping and place-based strategies to transition youth into supportive community environments rather than institutional ones.
- Promoting Fairness: Documenting the disproportionate contact of youth of color within Maine's system and the unintended consequences of juvenile records.

Maine-based data confirms national research consistently. Overreliance on secure confinement is a barrier to the very outcomes we seek safety, rehabilitation, and successful transition to adulthood. LD 1923 represents a critical step toward aligning Maine's policy with decades of data by repurposing the Long Creek facility and investing in a robust community support system.

Based on my two decades of data-driven systems improvement work, I urge the committee to vote on "Ought to Pass" on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Erica King, MSW