



Testimony in Favor of LD 178

March 13th, 2023

Good Morning Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

My name is Courtney Gary-Allen. I am the Organizing Director of the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project, a grassroots network of people in recovery, people who use drugs, and our allies. I am here today to testify in favor of LD 178: An Act to Support Reentry and Reintegration into the Community.

Today you will probably hear from The Maine Department of Corrections about the numerous rehabilitative, educational, job skills, and recovery programs they have worked to implement in the prison system and I want to begin by thanking them for that work.

I believe that Commissioner Liberty cares for the people who he is responsible to oversee in the prison system. I believe that Governor Mills' administration is committed to the rehabilitation of incarcerated people. And that is why it saddens me that both Governor Mills and the Commissioner are opposed to parole.

Parole is an opportunity to build on this administration's admirable efforts by giving people who are incarcerated one more pathway to successful reentry into our communities. Parole is about believing in second chances, second chances that are not freely given but instead earned by the individual receiving them. Parole is about holding people accountable for their actions, while also providing them with a pathway back into our community.

It's about believing that the opportunities that we are building on the inside for folks - including access to education, treatment, and recovery support - can and will translate to productive citizenship, if we also give people the opportunity to do so.

Today, I am asking each of you to believe in second chances, to believe in recovery, and to vote ought to pass on LD 178. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,
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