

Halle Carroll - LD178 Testimony

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

My name is Halle Carroll and I am here today in support of LD 178 and the effort to re-establish parole in Maine. I am a resident of Waterville, where I am a senior at Colby College.

As an anthropology major focusing on justice and liberation, I have gotten the chance in the last few years to learn in depth about carcerality in America, particularly the underlying systems of racism and inequality that lie at the root of the prison industrial complex.

Among the many takeaways I have gleaned from this learning, I want to share the two that feel most relevant to this conversation today. Firstly, that incarceration is NOT a one size fits all response to harm that happens in our communities. And secondly, that the demand to keep individuals isolated from a community they've hurt reflects a misunderstanding of crime, healing, and justice.

One man who is responsible for guiding me through this learning process has been my friend and teacher, Leo Hylton, who has been incarcerated for over a decade at Maine State Prison. Through my connection to Leo and his work with the Restorative Practice Steering Committee at MSP, I have made several trips to the prison and have gotten to meet and engage with a number of residents and staff there. Through this experience I have been lucky to get to know "the incarcerated" personally, in their kindness and complexity, which I know so many people aren't able to do.

From the bottom of my heart, I want to see these people have the chance to continue their healing processes beyond the confines of a cell and to become part of our community.

Maine needs parole - to save money, to better community, to heal, and frankly, to acknowledge our mistake of abolishing parole in the first place: a mistake which has made no improvement to our safety. Let's take this chance to bring back parole and embrace a path forward that enables everyone to get the support they need.

Thank you for your work and for considering my opinion. I hope I can count on your support for LD 178.