

March 13, 2023

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

My name is Holly Reid and I am a resident of Bath Maine. I am an ordained minister and I am a registered nurse. I am testifying today in support of LD 178 An Act to Support Reentry and Reintegration into the Community.

In one of my roles as ordained minister I have the privilege of going into the Maine State Prison and supporting a group of incarcerated men who are trained as hospice volunteers. All of the men volunteer because they want to give something back but some of the men volunteer because they have very long sentences and they expect that they will die in prison and they want to make sure that hospice is there when they die.

Each of the men I work with in the hospice program have worked hard to transform their life to become a person who is beautifully different than the person who committed that crime that landed them in prison. This rehabilitated person shouldn't be subject to die in prison but should be released in a supervised manner so that they may continue contribute constructively to society.

One of the things I have learned from working with the men in the hospice program is that there are two driving factors that help people to change. One is a person who cares about them. Reinstating parole in Maine allows to people to be more closely involved with people who care deeply for them. The second driving factor for change is hope. Parole gives people hope and that hope can be a powerful motivator for change.

I am here because in my faith tradition we believe in things like mercy, compassion, and that people can and do change. I believe that when people do change that they should be rewarded. Parole is not a get out of jail free card. But it does mean that people who have demonstrated changed lives get rewarded for the hard work of personal growth and transformation.

Finally, I testify before you today as a tax payer. I understand that there are victim advocacy groups that may have concerns about people getting out on parole. But I know it is possible to set up a system that protects victims and rewards good behavior. This is how I want the State of Maine to spend my money.

Thank you for hearing my testimony in support of LD 178.
Sincerely,
Holly Reid MDiv, RN