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My name is: Geoffrey Reese, and I am a resident here at the Maine State Prison. I have been incarcerated since 2008 - 15 years - for the crime of Elevated-Aggravated Assault for which I was given a sentence of 29-years. I am wholeheartedly in favor of parole in Maine, as practiced in numerous other states, and was also here in Maine in the distant past. My home state of Texas has parole. In my opinion, parole is a feasible remedy to excessive sentences such as mine; a second chance afforded to those who earn it and deserve an opportunity for redemption; and is an incentive for rehabilitation. It is a very smart mechanism that has multi-faceted benefits, both to the criminal justice system, and, the parolee, as well as the community. It allows for Adult Supervision by the Maine Department of Corrections, which actually offers safety to the victims and the community. Additionally, it allows for relevant data collection and a measure of successful re-entry that would otherwise been unknown and incalculable.

Maine abolished parole in the 1970's and has repeatedly failed to reinstate it, despite repeated legislative efforts over the past two

decades. At the very least, parole should be made available with criteria determining eligibility decided by the stakeholders, which include the M.D.O.C and victims advocates organizations.

Lastly, the Maine legislature of the recent past resolved to delegate the task of studying parole, which included several visits to the prisons, to the assembled Parole Commission. The Parole Commission and its 13 members recommended that parole be brought back by law. That is a significant development. Having parole available isn't opening the prison gates for every prisoner to be released early, as much of the opponents fear. Instead, it is affording the decision for review to be available "if" the prisoner earns and satisfies the requisites. Only upon the satisfaction of the Parole Board would it be possible for an earlier release to the community where ongoing supervision would ensue. The societal paradigm is shifting towards progressive criminal justice and prison reform - Maine should follow!

