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Thank you for the opportunity to be heard and it is my pleasure to support LD 1633.

I am a formerly incarcerated woman. So, it is firsthand knowledge of the need for more reentry services. I started going to MPRN weekly meetings before my release. However, the only reentry planning that was offered was through DOC case management.

I did everything I could to better my life while I was incarcerated. I had supportive family on the outside, and a stable living environment to go home to upon my release. Yet, I had no idea truly how to adjust to the community. I felt like I didn't belong. It felt like no one understood my struggle. It wasn't until the question, "how are you doing MacKenzie", was posed to me, in front of a large captive audience that I was able to be honest. "I'm struggling", was all I had to say to get the support I needed.

Because of the support I was given, I now work in reentry and recovery. I truly believe what we are missing in our reentry is support. Connection to other people who understand, and that know what we need. Regardless of criminal history, what we need is a chance to be successful. We can't expect people to be successful if their basic needs are not being met. The incarcerated population have huge barriers just to live. When we go to prison, we "pay for our crime". When we are released, it is not behind us, we continue to pay for it for the rest of our lives. We struggle with credit, housing, job opportunities etc.

People who work in and around reentry know where to look when trying to find low barrier resources. This is why I am in support of LD 1633. Help give people the resources they need in order to be successful upon their reentry. They deserve to be supported, regardless of their mistakes. If I wasn't given that opportunity, I would be where I am now.

Thank you for the consideration,

MacKenzie Kelley