

John Clark

[REDACTED], Lewiston Maine 04240

Good afternoon Be-be Center Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the criminal justice and public safety committee.

My name is Johnny Clark, and im in support of LD1633

I'm a constituent of Lewiston Maine a licensed Clinician as alcohol and drug counselor, MHRT-C, PBHP, Intentional peer support, State Registered recovery coach and re-entry /re-integration specialist, the reason I list all of these credentials is not for pride but because I too was formally incarcerated and suffered from substance use disorder.

I come to you today in long-term recovery I am the owner of two recovery homes one of which we are opening for women on the 15th of may I work as the program director of Maine prisoner re-entry network I'm also the owner of A Hand Up recovery and re-entry housing and the owner executive director of second chances family first recovery homes which will be opening September created to help families as a whole in recovery and work through the reunification process.

None of this means much here today but what does is that I was one that fell through the cracks, I was seen for the first time about a month out from release after serving several years in Maine state prison system told I would be able to finalize my re-entry into society the following week unfortunately this never happened nothing was ironed out and I was released with no real plan a plastic bag and 50 bucks gate money. I had plans to change and advocate for a better system from the second I left the prison, unfortunately this would not happen! The stress of finding work and permanent shelter was also on my mind and obviously my first challenge what I did not put into the plan was the mental health challenges that would occur from the isolation and violence I had endured while incarcerated while I thrived in prison, I found things much more difficult in society things unraveled quickly and the stress of everything pushed me into relapse. Had there been a better plan I may have been able to start this work much sooner and given just a little more help before being released. Well after being re-incarcerated because of my own actions dictated by a disease that does not discriminate, I received those services through the very same organization I now work for. The help I received came from Maine prisoner re-entry network. They helped me with a plan and peer support, something I never had on the previous bid.

The point to this story is justice involved individuals don't normally choose to break the law especially after serving a prison sentence they just need a little help and a plan. My plan came in the form of Bruce Noddin and his organization MPRN. The peer support they provided got me

over the hump and gave me a chance to truly rehabilitate today I have the opportunity and the honor of working in this field.

I have a purpose and determination to make this state a better one by helping those in their re-entry and those who suffer from substance use disorder, all it took for me was just a little empathetic ear and a plan please support LD1633 and Thank you for allowing me to tell my story!