

Tyler Dauteuil
Lewiston, ME
May 1, 2023

Re: L.D. 1779, An Act to Develop a continuum of care for youth involved in the justice system and to develop alternatives for juveniles incarcerated in Long Creek Youth Development Center.

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

My name is Tyler Dauteuil and I'm an organizer with Maine Youth Justice. I reside in Lewiston Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1779.

When I was 18 years old, I was arrested for walking down the street and defending my African-American friend who was assaulted by a police officer because my friend's brother who was under 18 at the time had a warrant for his arrest. I was assaulted by two other officers and detained against my rights also.

The way people are treated inside the prisons & detention centers is outrageous and the lack of training programs that will correct how the system should work and how the inmates get treated no matter what they are there for. C.O.s are corrupt because they abuse the inmates and take their belongings without any justified reasoning. C.O.s will make up lies about the inmates, and the inmates are getting things revoked from them because they don't want to do illegal things for the C.O.s. If this bill does get put into effect then young people aren't going to be put at risk for being abused and beaten because they don't want to do something for the correctional officers. If this bill is passed, we will be able to create programs that show the young people of the community how to divert their anger and emotions towards poetry, writings, and even music. Investing in support to keep young people out of prison will help kids learn how to take their responsibilities seriously without being scared they are going to be hit, talked down to or yelled at if they mess up. We should give them the best chances at developing a sense of maturity in spaces built for that and that they weren't getting from home, school, and jail.

I would love to see athletic fields, playgrounds, afterschool programs, free resource centers with computers, tvs, video games, board games, etc. in the community for kids instead of spending millions on a youth prison. Imagine what a difference it would be if we could have things like mental health facilities that don't need insurance to help someone, doctor offices that will work with you based on a sliding scale of what you can afford. If we reinvest the millions of dollars that are tied to youth incarceration into these kinds of programs, we could actually meet the needs of young people in Maine.

In summary, LD 1779 would benefit the community and young people in positive and functional ways. For these reasons, I request this Committee to vote ought to pass on LD 1779.