



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Representative Sophie Warren presenting*

## **LD 1359, An Act to Provide an Opportunity for Resentencing for Individuals Who Were Sentenced for Crimes Committed as Juveniles**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety*

Good afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and respected members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Sophie Warren and I am fortunate to serve House District 124. I appreciate this opportunity to present **LD 1359, An Act to Provide an Opportunity for Resentencing for Individuals Who Were Sentenced for Crimes Committed as Juveniles**.

I will begin my testimony with my request for your consideration to carry-over this bill to be heard in the second regular session in 2024.

Since this bill was drafted and then printed, I have been fortunate to discuss this legislation with a variety of interested parties and I come to you this afternoon with the understanding that there is a good use for this bill, but also that at this point, the bill just isn't in a format that it could reasonably be considered for passage by your Committee in our remaining time during this session. It needs a lot of work. If considered by your Committee, I am committed to dedicate the time between this session and the next to do that work, with impacted communities, advocates, Office of the Attorney General, members of your Committee and the Administration to determine what a bill on this issue should really look like in a way rooted in Maine's systems and for Maine people.

The bill before you this afternoon as drafted is modeled on the Juvenile Restoration Act passed two years ago in Maryland. It provides to people who were children at the time of their offense, but tried as an adult, to have the opportunity for re-sentencing. In Maryland, it has had a demonstrable positive impact providing a pathway for restorative justice for more than twenty people and their loved ones. This model seeks to listen to harm reduction advocates and juvenile justice advocates and to incorporate science and data-driven analysis of overlong sentences on people who did not have a fully-developed brain or the power in society to control their own environment, choices or resources available to them at that time of their conviction.

Carrying this bill over to the short session affords time to allow the public, advocates, the Administration, and Committee members to consider and provide important input on a meaningful juvenile justice bill that is written in a way to come back to your Committee for public hearing and at that time, be ready for your full consideration, amendment or critique to that bill, rather than this one and the concept draft format that is now before you, to ensure this reform bill can be fully considered and hopefully passed through your Committee and so that it can help Maine people as it intends to do.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

District 124: Part of Scarborough