

Greetings to the distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee

My name is Vicki Dill. I am here today to speak in opposition of LD 1335 "An Act to Prohibit Life Sentences". Life sentence with no chance of parole, as it stands now in Maine, is imposed on convictions of murder, a class A crime. This is a crime that we should not take lightly. Longevity of a life sentence will allow victims to start that very long road of healing.

A life sentence brings justice and some form of peace or closure to victims. I am a victim. My sister Debbie was 18 years old when she was murdered. I was just 10 years old. Our family lived in fear for 16 years while the perpetrator was on the loose. 18 years after Debbie was murdered, he was tried and convicted of murder under the old code. He received 25 years to life, the current maximum amount for sentencing. Debbie was murdered in what we later learned was a random attack by an assailant my sister did not know.

Until that capture, my mother never knew who it was and where he was. I didn't have a normal childhood. Living in fear, terrified that that person could strike our family again. When he was finally captured, and we had a trial, it was only then that we felt peace in our lives when the sentence was given.

Elimination of a life sentence will hamstring Judges in their lawful authority and responsibility to impose just sentences based on the crime committed. There are sentencing guidelines in place, so judges do not give life to cases that do not meet the criteria.

This Act to Prohibit Life Sentences is detrimental to the citizens of our State. When a crime of murder has been committed, a life sentence is the only sentence to justify healing in victims' families, as well as the 1.3 million citizens in Maine. We do not have the death penalty in Maine. We have a life sentence.

Victims of murder no longer have a voice. Victims of murder no longer have rights. It is our responsibility as citizens in our state, the Legislature and Senate bodies, to ensure the safety of our population, against violent crimes, such as murder.

I will ask all of you, when the time comes, that you vote OUGHT NOT TO PASS.

This will offer peace and comfort to the families of all victims in Maine.

Thank you

Vicki Dill