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Esteemed Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee:

My name is Deborah Sachare and I am testifying in strong support of LD 648 - An Act to Expand Supervised ~~Community Confinement~~.

As a new Maine resident and voting constituent, I was appalled to learn that a State so publicly emphatic about hope and public safety is so far behind the rest of New England when it comes to safe mechanisms of rehabilitation in our prison systems.

I will let others speak to specific statistics about the disproportionate representation of ethnic minorities, former foster children, and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse in Maine's prison system, and instead share from my perspective. I am speaking as someone who has personally experienced victimization. I am also someone closely connected to a loved one who has spent over 15 years growing up in Maine's prison system. He committed a violent crime between the ages of 18-26 and has since grown into a mature adult who is the most dedicated person I know to stopping violence and supporting victims of crime.

Please make no mistake, my loved one knows full well that whatever good he does from here on out will never even begin to repair the harm that he has caused. This bill would not alter his sentence. It simply changes where his sentence is served - to living with his loving, supportive family and not at the burden of Maine taxpayers. Based on his current release date, it will cost us taxpayers over \$2 million dollars to just keep him in prison. I don't know about you, but I don't have that kind of money. Allowing him an opportunity to finish his sentence in community means that instead of draining our economy, he can contribute to it meaningfully, in a supported family environment.

He is not the same person he was over 15 years ago... are any of us? Many people who are incarcerated for committing a violent crime are survivors of some form of childhood trauma. He was a hurt teenager who grew up into a more healed man: who found a life of God, a life of accountability, a life of moral and emotional stability, a life dedicated to education and restorative justice, personal exploration to confront ugly truths and find compassion from the love of God to heal them. He is not a different man, only a more accountable, grown, and healed one.

We are all capable of committing violent acts, and this is most immediately true when we are young and our brains have not fully matured. What this bill is asking for--what I am asking for--is that when someone has committed such an act as a young person, we let the public safety experts at MDOC check in with them after 15 years. Let these young people have a chance to show they are ready to be safe community members once they have grown up and learned from the terrible decisions of their youth.

So, I ask of you: please pass LD 648. This is a safe, humane choice for the State I now call home. Thank you.

Deborah Sachare
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