



Restorative Justice Project Maine

Testimony in Favor of LD 648

An Act to Expand the Supervised Community Confinement Program

April 23, 2025

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

My name is ~~Charlotte Cramer~~, and I speak to you today on behalf of Restorative Justice Project Maine's Legislative Committee, to urge you to pass LD 648 - An Act to Expand the Supervised Community Confinement Program. This bill provides a much needed opportunity for people who were sentenced to lengthy prison terms for crimes that occurred before they were 26, and who have served at least 15 years of their sentence, to be considered for SCCP.

There are a few key reasons why this bill is so critical. First, it recognizes the overwhelming scientific evidence that the human brain, particularly the areas responsible for impulse control and decision-making, continues to develop well into a person's mid-20s.¹ This understanding as it relates to emerging adults has shaped juvenile justice reforms across the country, yet Maine remains one of the states that lags behind the recognition of this brain science in its laws.

As someone who facilitates Restorative Justice processes for youth who are facing criminal charges, I can attest to the fact that young people do not always have the capacity to fully comprehend the long-term consequences of their actions. What they do have is a unique capacity to learn from their mistakes. On a daily basis, I see that when young people are given the opportunity to show accountability and make amends for their actions, they do. LD 648 would allow those who caused serious harm when they were young to demonstrate how they have changed for the better.

Second, this bill follows through on the Maine Department of Corrections' stated goal to "rebuild and transform lives." If we as a state truly believe in the rehabilitative goals outlined in the Maine Model of Corrections, we must have pathways for incarcerated people who have shown that they are no longer a threat to return to their communities. And yet, Maine is one of only 18 states in the nation that does not have parole.² Expanding SCCP eligibility to those who have demonstrated a commitment to transformation is a critical step toward a fairer and more rehabilitative system.

¹ Restore Justice, "Emerging Adults," *Restore Justice*, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://www.restorejustice.org/learn/emerging-adults/>.

² Campaign Zero, "On the Issue of Parole," *Campaign Zero*, accessed April 22, 2025, <https://campaignzero.org/on-the-issue-of-parole/>.



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Finally, a core tenet of restorative practices is the belief in people's inherent ability to learn, grow, and change. Many incarcerated people in our state work tirelessly to better themselves despite currently having no opportunities for early release. Expanding SCCP would not only give these individuals hope and validation that their efforts matter, but would also allow our communities to benefit from their growth and wisdom when they return home. The youth I work with desperately need mentors and role models who both understand their struggles, and are living proof that it is possible to overcome those struggles. Returning citizens have a unique ability to connect with our at-risk youth, break cycles of trauma and harm, and profoundly impact our communities for the better.

LD 648 is an opportunity for Maine to invest in hope, redemption, and the potential for people to be known for who they have become, rather than for their worst mistakes. Restorative Justice Project Maine urges you to support LD 648, and to take this important step toward a more just, restorative, and rehabilitative approach to sentencing and incarceration in Maine.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Cramer

Restorative Justice Project Maine Legislative Committee