

Honorable Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Leo Hylton, and I am writing in strong and informed support of LD 1941, doing so as an incarcerated citizen in Maine State Prison - Warren. I caused serious and irreparable harm at the age of 18 that brought me to prison and have now been incarcerated for almost 18 years. I am not writing today out of a belief that incarcerated people can *deserve* the opportunity of parole or a second chance at life. Rather, I am writing from a place of responsibility to help lessen the amount of harm caused by the current system and persistent recidivism rate. The current system of straight release, Good Time, and SCCP is woefully inadequate in supporting public safety, Maine's economy, and victim/survivors of crime and harm.

LD 1941 provides support in each of these areas, as I elaborate on in the December issue of the *Bollard* (please see my column, entitled "Addressing Parole Concerns for Maine Lawmakers").

First, this bill prioritizes increased public safety by: 1. Utilizing a multidisciplinary board of professionals to thoroughly evaluate applicants; 2. Implementing an evidence-based actuarial risk assessment to support the Parole Board in only granting Parole to those who pose no threat to public safety; and 3. Requiring special guidelines to be developed for applicants convicted of sex or domestic violence offenses for added layers of safety and protection. If someone poses a threat to public safety, or does not have a strong enough Parole plan, they will not be granted Parole.

Second, this bill contributes materially to Maine's economy. Rather than continuing to strip Maine taxpayers of \$120,000 each year—per prisoner—this bill authors both a reduction of an estimated \$13.3 million and an addition of \$14.7 million to Maine's economy. Even though the direct savings per person won't be the full \$120,000, that equals an approximate \$28 million each year added to Maine's bottom line for every 100 citizens paroled.

Third, and absolutely vital, LD 1941 provides rights and trauma-informed care to victim/survivors that was developed exclusively by victim/survivors. This includes their having choice and voice in parole decisions, support in addressing trauma, and trauma-informed notification from the DOC's Office of Victim Services at each step of the parole process. Victim/survivors can choose their level of involvement and choose to speak once and have their voice stand indefinitely. This parole process would empower victim/survivors in ways that no criminal legal process currently does outside of restorative justice.

It is for these reasons of improved public safety, a stronger Maine economy, and new empowerment of victim/survivors of crime and harm that I respectfully implore you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1941 today.

Thank you so much,

Leo Hylton, MDOC #70199
Maine State Prison