



Maine Medical
Association



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
AND
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION**

In Support Of

**LD 1941 - An Act to Implement Recommendations of the Commission to Examine
Reestablishing Parole**

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Room 220, Cross Building, Augusta, Maine
Thursday, January 8, 2026

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Lani Graham, MD, MPH. I am a physician and the former chief public health officer for Maine. I am submitting this testimony in support of LD. 1941, An Act to Implement Recommendations of the Commission to Examine Reestablishing Parole on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and the Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,300 allopathic and osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State. The MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined to advocate with one voice. We have all determined that testifying in support of LD 1941 is important.

Keeping people incarcerated is expensive. Estimates are that keeping an adult incarcerated in Maine costs us, taxpayers between eighty (\$80,000) to about one hundred and seventeen thousand dollars (\$117,000) annually.¹ I'm sure each of us can imagine good uses for such funds if they were not tied to incarceration. Reinstating parole is one solution virtually guaranteed to reduce the Maine prison population while at the same time assuring good outcomes for Maine communities.

Let's start with the prison aging crisis. About thirteen percent of people in Maine prisons are over the age of 55. The prison population in Maine is aging fast, with the percentage of incarcerated people over 55 expected to rise to one third of the total by 2030.² These are people who tend to have chronic diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart

¹ <https://247wallst.com/crime/2024/06/20/see-what-each-state-spends-on-each-prisoner/>

² <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/05/11/55plus/one-third,>

conditions. At the same time, these elderly prisoners are very unlikely to be rearrested if released on parole.³ A well-run parole system could save thousands of taxpayer dollars while at the same time increasing the likelihood that an incarcerated person is prepared to return to his or her community.

Another issue to consider is the importance of incentivizing incarcerated people to participate in programs and care that will help them become better members of Maine communities when they are ultimately released, as about 95% of them will be.⁴ The Maine prison population is made up of people who may not easily see the value of participating in the rehabilitation programs offered to them. Compared to the general population, the incarcerated have lower levels of educational attainment, have experienced more adverse childhood experiences, and may be living with a mental health illness. A parole program would help draw this population to engage in necessary care and services.

This is a step Maine needs to take. We hope you will support Parole for Maine. Thank you for your attention.

Lani Graham, MD, MPH

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<https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2017/2017-1207-Recidivism-Age.pdf>

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<https://www.justice.gov/usao-edpa/pr/looking-back-second-chance-month-2024-and-year-reentry-initiatives>