

Cindy Charest
Westbrook

Senator Deschambeault, Representative Warren, Representative Brooks, and honorable members of the committee:

I am writing to express support for LD 963, "An Act To Create Culturally Sensitive Treatment and Recovery Halfway Houses for Immigrants Transitioning out of the Juvenile Justice System." My name is Cindy Charest and I am a resident of Westbrook.

I have been a part of the Greater Portland community for over 37 years and have interacted in many settings with members of the immigrant community. I have familiarity with the immigrant community due to personal relationships with members, as well as many interactions with a large number of immigrants during the general election, and have found them to be kind, hard-working people who deserve this support.

It is important to recognize the need for understanding of cultural background and also the possibilities for difficulties when immigrant youth are thrown in with non-immigrant populations, due to xenophobia, racism and potential lack of understanding of cultural and religious norms.

In my opinion, this service will be an important resource for youth who are working to find a balance among cultures. As you know, current resources for youth rehabilitation are inadequate. The lack of culturally competent facilities increases the risk of homelessness, drug addiction, and other sources of severe difficulties.

Thank you very much for considering this bill.

Sincerely,

Cindy Charest
20 Lunt Drive
Westbrook, ME 04092
207-797-9552-H