

Abdirizak Mahamoud
Lewiston

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

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. I am here to speak in favor of 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 Abdirizak and I am a resident of Lewiston. Among other thobgs I did work for Lewiston school system and for DHHS.

I am sharing my experiences today as a member of the community and what I have seen around even some of my kids' childhood friends and what happen with them.

In my story to show how this project is needed to intervene is guiding and supporting those who come through the justice system for the first time.

The fist story is about a nice active and smart kid who used to play with my own son and attend cartoons with him when they were little young.

When this smart helping and bright kid reach high school he started slipping away and through friends started walking in the drug highway and never stopped until he was in jail. For a minor of fence and for a short time.

Not able to adjust and feeling the shame of failing his good family and his community, he moved to another state and Co ti ued with the drug enterprise he was associated with before jail. In the other state he killed two girls and went to jail for 30 years where he is now.

The second kid was inthe "Juvy" for also minor infractions and gang activities.

He was lucky to have community members who picked up his hands and guided him to safety and focusing on his future. Currently this young man is successfully married and is a principal of a charter school in another state and helping his students avoid his mistakes.

I can not stress enough for the need of having the community and authority work together to nebfeit the society and produced useful, decent, taxpaying American citizens.

Thank you

Abdirizak Mahmoud.