



Dear Senator Desambault, Representative Warren, and Distinguished Members of Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

My name is Marshall Mercer, and I am an organizer for ME-RAP (Maine Recovery Advocate Project), I am also still a Student of Recovery and was once a slave to this very system. I am here to testify in favor of LD 663, An Act to make comprehensive Substance Use Disorder Treatment available to Maine's incarcerated Population,

I was just in a group with some of our incarcerated population on zoom, that was about to enter back into the system. While in this group I could hardly refrain myself from letting go of every tear in my head, while listening to their concerns. Their greatest fear is knowing that they are being released back into the belly of the beast, without any networks set up, or treatment in place, and that just breaks my heart that anyone would ever have to feel that way.

Leaving a facility with no connection, or networks or without the right medical treatment, could be life or death for someone with a SUD (Substance Use Disorder) could as well be as easy as life or death for them, they were so afraid that they didn't even want to leave their very own imprisonment, in fear of the slavery that awaits them on the outside,

I believe we can do better and not just the system, but we as a people, but we as a people come to you kind folks because we need your help, understanding we all have a part to play, and we are willing to help out, in any way to assist in this mess.

If this bill were to pass, and there were coordination with representatives of local Recovery communities, medical providers and other appropriate persons to offer case management, traditional and peer support, medication management, reentry planning and comprehensive treatment options to clients after release.

I bet there would be less fear and more results, and when I look around this room, I see people that look like they like results.

Thank you all very much for your time.

I am available for any questions that I can answer. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Marshall Mercer  
(Student of Recovery) & No Longer a slave to the system