



MAINE
Unitarian Universalist
State Advocacy Network

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Testimony Before the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety on
LD 1668, "Resolve, To Develop a Plan to Close the Long Creek Youth
Development Center and Redirect Funding to Community Integration
Services for Adjudicated Youth"

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and esteemed members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public safety:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the passage of LD 1668. My name is Mary Finn and I live in Saco. I submit this testimony on behalf of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) as a person of faith, committed to our fundamental principle of justice, equity and compassion in all human relations.

Last summer, thousands of Mainers demonstrated to demand that state and local leaders shift resources from prisons into our local communities. We have an opportunity right here to do just that. Closing Long Creek and shifting some of the 18.6 million dollars from the criminal justice system to a continuum of community services to meet an individual's needs, would be a solution and a way prevent the trauma caused by incarceration. Children and youth in Maine have a right to an education and support in their transition to adulthood. We have a responsibility to do just that by voting to pass LD 1668.

I am the mother of a son who, due to errors in judgment, was accused of juvenile offenses ten years ago in another state. Our family knew that if the judge determined that he should serve time in a juvenile jail, the choice would be the judge's choice alone. Fortunately for our son, a continuum of services was available in our community, and jail time avoided. Years later, he is a successful, productive young adult. Our son had the benefit of a continuum of community-based supports which were key to his transition into adulthood and his becoming a contributing member of society.

We need to do more for our at-risk youth here in Maine. If we do not take this action, youth will continue to suffer at Long Creek and carry the trauma of being there for the rest of their lives. Let's do the right thing and vote to pass LD 1668 and invest in the future of Maine's next generation.

Thank you.