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Skye Gosselin
May 10 2021

LD 1668 - To Develop a Plan To Close the Long Creek Youth Development Center and Redirect Funding to Community Integration Services for Adjudicated Youth

Representative Warren, Senator Deschambault and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Skye Gosselin and I'm a Community Organizer with Maine Youth Justice. I am 22 years old and a resident of Biddeford, ME. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Maine Youth Justice is a nonpartisan campaign fighting to end youth incarceration in Maine and invest in a range of community based supports that respond to young people's needs, support families, and build community. We are a campaign led by young people who have been incarcerated in Long Creek and directly impacted by the juvenile justice system. We are calling for the closure of Long Creek Youth Development Center, the end of youth incarceration, and the reinvestment of the \$18.6 million dollars currently being spent to lock up Maine's youth.

I'm here to testify in support of LD 1668. The bill will direct the Maine Department of Corrections to create a plan to close Long Creek Youth Development Center by June 2023 and repurpose the facility to serve as a community center and supportive housing.

I was 12 years old the first time I was introduced to the system. I was a little girl who got bullied and I finally stuck up for myself , and I got called down the principal's office. There I was met by the principal and school resource officer saying I couldn't walk home. I had no choice and I ended up getting arrested in front of my whole school and taken to the police station. That day kids were chasing the cop car. I had my first mug shot. My childhood got ripped away from that

