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Portland Rising

Representative Warren, Senator Deschambault, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I am speaking today in support of LD 1668, to develop a plan to close the Long Creek Youth Development Center and redirect funding to community integration services. Shamefully, in Maine's only remaining youth prison, Black and brown kids, LGBTQ+ kids, and disabled kids are incarcerated at much higher rates than the general population. We've also seen proof over the last decade that the current Long Creek system can't keep kids safe - from COVID, from sexual assault, from mental health challenges.

Some kids are detained at Long Creek due merely to unsafe home environments and the state lacking anywhere else to send them. Maine spends over \$18 million a year to operate the facility (currently \$600K/child), which could be reinvested in community support programs and safe housing options outside of the traumatizing carceral system.

For equity, for justice, and for investing in Maine kids, please support LD 1668. We can do so much better for our community.