

Lily SanGiovanni  
Maine Youth Justice

Hello, my name is Lily SanGiovanni, I am a resident of Portland, Maine. As Maine Youth Justice's newly hired Campaign Coordinator, I am here today to urge you to vote in favor of LD 1668 and support the closure of Long Creek Youth Development Center.

I grew up in South Portland and became conscious of the harm being done in Long Creek when I was thirteen. My peers who were spending time in Long Creek were being harmed, stigmatized, and left unsupported by South Portland School Department and the greater community. The 18.6 million dollars the state spends on incarcerating youth should absolutely be reinvested into a comprehensive support network that properly addresses the lack of resources available to our youth. This community has a profound opportunity to send a message to our youth that we are listening to their trauma and needs, we are unconditionally rooting for them, and they are always deserving of care.

LD 1668 has the potential to positively impact our community at large. We will all be safer and more supported when our most vulnerable are safe and supported. Long Creek sends harm rippling through our community. LD 1668 will give hope and impact that will ripple far beyond this community.

As a person who has never been directly impacted by incarceration, I urge you to really listen to the realities of how Long Creek is actually impacting our community members, and not let preconceived assumptions on how you think Long Creek is functioning cloud your judgment. Just one person's statement of harm caused by Long Creek should be enough to get the community's attention and consideration.

The time is now to pass LD 1668, divest from Long Creek, and reinvest in our youth and our community. Thank you for your time.