

Maureen Wissman
Portland

Honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee: my name is Maureen Wissman, I am a resident of Portland and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1668. Incarceration is harmful to young people - it makes it harder for them to finish school, to eventually get jobs, & to build healthy relationships. It also disproportionately affects youth of color - to whit, 23% of youth detained at Long Creek are Black while Black people only comprise 1.6% of ME residents. Maintaining & investing in youth prisons doesn't mitigate crime, but investing in community programs that combat root causes of crime does - job training, mental health services, & supportive housing are examples. Closing Long Creek and reinvesting those funds to build systems that truly support youth, as this bill proposes to do, will result in the positive, healthy outcomes for young people we all want. I urge you to support this bill. Thank you for your time.