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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this testimonial to share my experience with DOC and the SCCP program. As a "long-timer", I originally thought the program was established to assist those who have been incarcerated for a prolonged period have a smoother transition back into their communities. I was mistaken.

Over the course of more than 12 years, I spent the first 13 months in a county jail, nearly eight years at the Maine Correctional Center, and 3 years at the Southern Maine Women's Re-entry Center. During my time at MCC (2010-2018), I took every class available to me, including substance abuse, parenting, anger management, accounting, and business law, plus countless others. From 2011-2018, I worked in the women's industry workshop, eventually earning minimum status and transferring to the Southern Maine Women's Reentry Center.

Once at SMWRC, I secured a position at the warehouse, working Monday through Friday, and enrolled in college for the 2018 fall semester. I began college as a full-time student in September, took a laundry position, and worked at the Maine State Society for the Protection of Animals as a community volunteer. In all cases, I worked until my eligibility date for community status approached in December 2020.

I obtained community status in January 2020 and secured employment immediately. The work release program enabled me to work full-time as a cook at Applebee's in South Portland while attending college full-time. For the month of March, the team approved one 4-hour day pass furlough per week with my family. By mid-March, all programs were withdrawn because of Covid-19.

I remained busy by focusing on my classes, training to be a recovery coach, and assisting women with their classes and their recovery. During this time, I completed an internship with My Sister's Keeper: a mentoring ministry that assists women with their transition from incarceration back to their communities. This connection has enabled me to support women releasing, connecting them with resources they may not otherwise have access to.

I spoke with my caseworker Jen Clapp in June 2020, informing her I was eligible for the SCCP program and wanted to submit my packet. She said let me talk with the Unit team and I will get back to you. The recommendation from the team was to wait until I return to work and apply at the end of the year.

The work release program resumed in July 2020, and I returned to work at Applebee's in Windham as a full-time prep cook. The Center was still closed for visits, passes, and furloughs, so that was not an option. After earning my associate's degree with honors in Mental Health &

Human Services in August 2020, I began taking classes towards a bachelor's degree. In October 2020, the work release program was again suspended because of the pandemic.

I presented my SCCP packet to the Unit team in December 2020; it was approved and forwarded to probation. Within two weeks, I had a phone interview with probation. After discussing my release plan the probation officer replied, "This program is designed for individuals like you who have served lengthy prison sentences". The probation officer visited my son's home where I would go on home confinement, spoke with my son on the phone for follow-up questions, and approved my placement. The only thing left was to obtain personal statements from the victims, and community sentiment. In January 2021, Mary Laroche called me to the program room and stated my SCCP was denied because of the victim's impact and community sentiment. Upon notification of denial, I wrote an appeal to Ben Beale, Director of classifications. He returned a brief reply of "I concur, your appeal is denied".

On July 2, 2021, after more than 12 years in prison, I will be released without probation. This left me puzzled as to how I could qualify for community status, go to work all day, handle knives, and have full responsibility for this job but not be permitted to spend five months on SCCP. A five-month home confinement period would be the next logical step and provide me with some supervision during this transition period. This would offer me a solid foundation for reentry and allow me to adapt to daily life. With all the programs suspended here, I no longer have the option for financial stability or any progression that would assist in my reentry.

Throughout my time in prison, I have not had disciplinary issues or write-ups. Numerous staff members have told me I am a model resident, including Michelle McLaughlin, the unit manager when I spoke with her about applying for home confinement. I have consistently showed respect to all staff members, officers, and fellow residents while they have shown the same in return. I have observed individuals who have been approved for such programs returning repeatedly as if it were a revolving door. However, a model resident who has been responsible and dedicated to personal, academic, and professional growth is denied. This is a difficult "pill" to swallow and only conveys the message that it does not matter how rehabilitated you are, a long-timer does not stand a chance for home confinement. Department of Corrections will allow you to work in the community, and pay rent but not permit a brief stay of home confinement. How is that fair or helpful toward a successful re-entry?

Thank you for your time and consideration for this testimonial.

Best Regards,

Corina Durkee