

## *Mainers against Solitary Confinement*

Honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee (or  
Honorable State Representatives)

My name is Nikole Powell and I am writing in support of LD 696 – An Act to  
Prohibit Solitary Confinement in Maine

I want to write in support of this bill because of my experience with Solitary  
Confinement and how it affected both my life and my father's life.

When I was 12 years old, I was the victim of a serious crime. I was brutally raped, stabbed, and was left unable to walk for almost 7 months. I was in the hospital for 3 months during which time I had to endure 4 surgeries and continual excruciating pain. When the crime happened, my father killed 2 men and received a prison sentence of 10 years under a crime of passion law. One of the men who was involved in the crime but wasn't killed went to the same prison as my father on a much larger sentence.

I lived in Alaska, where crime rates are unusually high due to isolation and mental health problems. While my dad was in prison, he was in general population with this man and ended up stabbing him as well. Even though the man didn't die, my father served 5 years in solitary confinement. I remember going to visit him and we had to ride in a hot, stuffy van to get there just to see him for 30 minutes in a cold, dark room where rocks stuck out of the walls. He always had 5-point harnesses on and it was hard to even give my dad a hug because he couldn't bring his arms up to hug me back. I remember crying a lot when we would leave.

When I was 15, my grandmother couldn't care for me anymore so I moved to Maine with my biological mother, who is was someone I didn't even know. I didn't get to see my dad again.

After he was released when I was 18, my dad became addicted to drugs. The time he spent in solitary confinement deteriorated his mental health and left him not knowing how to deal with this loss of his mental faculties, while also not knowing how to ask for help. He ended up overdosing and dying that same year.

I am now 33 and have never been able to get through the pain of losing my father. This loss is now shared by my children losing the chance to know their

grandfather, and I miss him more every day, especially when I wish I could just turn to him for advice and love and maybe just a hug when I need it.

Please sign and pass this bill to help prevent people from becoming so isolated and damaged that their traumas end up taking them away from their families forever.

I thank you for your time and consideration and am happy to answer any questions.