

Gloria Aponte Clarke
Portland
LD 178

An Act to Support Reentry and Reintegration into the Community

In support of LD 178 -

Submitted by: Gloria Aponte Clarke
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I am writing to submit testimony in support of LD178. I am particularly concerned about the racial equity implications of the prison system. It is well documented that there is a large racial disparity in sentencing. We know that black people are 1% of Maine's population but they make up 11% of our prison population! And an even higher number 12% are those with life and virtual life sentences.

Parole incentivizes rehabilitation and improves re-entry. Parole also improves public safety. Parole also boosts the economy and saves main tasks payers money. It's nine times more expensive to put someone in prison than to supervise them on parole. Parole would be safe for our communities because parole would not be granted to anyone who represents a risk to the community. Proof of rehabilitation would be required. It's also a great transition back into the community. The parole process helps rehabilitation and offers ways to contribute to the community I ask that you officially recommend that parole return to Maine. We need more people in our workforce. There is a projected \$14.7 million annual increase to Maine's economy for every 100 paroled workers!

It's time to reconsider sentencing and release policies in Maine reinstating parole would offer supported safe way to reverse the harms caused by eliminating parole.

Thank you for your consideration,
Gloria Aponte Clarke