

Testimony for LD 178

March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 10:00 am

Criminal Justice Committee

Provided by Ricardo LeDoux

Honorable Members of the Criminal Justice Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for LD 178, An Act to Support Reentry and Reintegration. This bill seeks to reinstate the parole system in Maine, which was abolished in 1976. As an ex-resident of Maine, I believe that reinstating parole is crucial for creating a more just and effective criminal justice system in our state.

One of the primary reasons why I believe that parole should be reinstated is because it will provide an opportunity for those who have been incarcerated to reintegrate into society. As it stands, prisoners who are released from Maine's correctional facilities are often left without any support or resources to help them transition back into the community. This lack of support often leads to recidivism, as individuals are unable to find housing, employment, or other basic needs. With the opportunity for parole, however, individuals can be provided with the resources and support they need to successfully reintegrate into society.

In addition to providing support for individuals who have been incarcerated, reinstating parole can also benefit our communities. With the current system, individuals who have been released from prison are often left without any supervision or guidance, which can make them more likely to engage in criminal activity. By offering parole, however, individuals can be held accountable for their actions and required to adhere to a set of rules and regulations. This can help to reduce the likelihood of recidivism and make our communities safer.

Another reason why I believe that LD 178 should be passed is because it is consistent with the values of justice and fairness. As a society, we believe in the principles of rehabilitation and second chances. By abolishing parole, we have effectively denied individuals who have been incarcerated the opportunity to redeem themselves and make amends for their past actions. Reinstating parole is a critical step towards correcting this injustice and providing individuals with a path to rehabilitation and reintegration.

My dear friend has been incarcerated for 18 years and has worked to change his life. He has earned his associates, two bachelor's degrees, a master's degree, and I am supporting him as he starts a PhD. I have watched him take responsibility for the fight that ended our friend's life in 2006. He has found recovery, is connected with so many beautiful people, and he has several opportunities when he leaves to support other people and to even teach at a University.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support LD 178 and reinstate the parole system in Maine. Doing so will not only benefit individuals who have been incarcerated, but will also promote public safety and support the values of justice and fairness. Thank you for your time and consideration.