

Brian Pitman
Orono
LD 178

Dear Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

My name is Brian Pitman and I am an Orono resident. My day job is a criminology professor, though I do not write this testimony on behalf of my employer. This testimony is on behalf of myself as a resident in the state.

We must support ways for individuals to be released from incarceration and this bill, if utilized correctly, can be one of those ways. As Bryan Stevenson says, each person is more than the worst thing they have ever done. I have had the privilege of meeting many incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people through my advocacy in the state. They are some of the brightest and thoughtful people I have met. They deserve another chance.

While Gov. Mills has cited concern for victims in her hesitancy on re-installing parole, it shows a lack of regard for how those incarcerated are the survivors of a system that has failed them. We live in a country that incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. Maine incarcerates approximately 328 per 100,000 people according to the Prison Policy Initiative, many of whom are part of marginalized groups. This approach of incarceration is a true failure in addressing the harms of our societies and the harms people commit within our society. We need care in our communities. Not incarceration. This bill could be a step in the right direction. Thank you for your time.