

Julian Soto
Warren
LD 178

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

My name is Julian Soto and I am writing in support of LD 178.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Criminal justice and Public Safety Committee for their tireless work on behalf of LD 178. I have heard a lot about parole potentially coming back, and I must admit that I questioned myself if I had done anything to warrant parole being granted to me, with the exception of completing one-third of my sentence.

Yes, I have taken various programs here at Maine State Prison, most notably the Houses of Healing. This program has been facilitated by Mr. Ephraim K Bennett for a decade and upon taking his class, I started the process of truly understanding the significance of what my actions have meant to not only my victim, but also her family and friends; also my community and my own family. Since taking that class in 2018, Mr. Ephraim K Bennett has spent day in and day out mentoring me to become a productive citizen. He encouraged me to work towards helping to rebuild the community that I once helped to destroy. Since being under his tutelage, I have gone on to college and a few other personal accomplishments, but that's all they truly are: personal accomplishments.

Mr. Ephraim K Bennett helped me to realize that these personal goals and achievements mean nothing if I don't have true remorse for what I did to my victim. As I let the above thought sink into my heart, I have begun to dig deep within my own self to take complete and full responsibility for the world of pain and heartache that I forced my victim to endure. And that starts with acknowledging that no amount of degrees and certificates I stack and pile up can ever make up for what I did.

At this moment, all I can do is hold fast to my new relationship with God that has shown me how to value all human life. I can use this value of human life as a compass to use to walk a life your life's Mission so to speak to allow myself to be changed. And, God willing, to help any other human being that I will eventually come across in this path called life. With that being said, I can truthfully say that I do not deserve parole, but there are a select few that absolutely deserve a chance at parole, but that is only a few.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my testimony with you all. God bless.