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Warren
LD 178

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Testimony To Support LD-178 – An Act To Support Reentry And Reintegration Into The Community

I support this bill because; my incarceration began December 16, 1998! I was twenty years old (20). I am a three-time recidivist. Practically the entirety of my childhood I was abused by my dad! I was molested by a stranger I got away from and told my mom & dad about, but my dad said I was a liar. That is as far as that conversation ever went. Having no one to talk to about the trauma and struggles in my childhood & life, it became the norm to not talk about anything with anyone. Why would it be different talking to someone else? I tried pot and it was ok, it made me laugh! Something that I couldn't experience normally, getting beat up every day was no laughing matter. I would cry almost every night hearing my mom cry from my dad hitting her. At times he would peek in my brother & I's room to see if we were awake. We faked sleeping!

I became accustomed to not talking about anything. As I got older, I experimented other drugs to rid the awful feelings, began drinking alcohol. Eventually I had children, 4, two boys, two girls! My youngest was born August 13th, 1998. I was abusing drugs frequently for multiple reasons. The drugs made me happy; so, I thought. I thought it was the only way I could experience happiness because I didn't think about my childhood. Also, a severe ATV accident contributed to my substance use worsening. Also, I was in a coma for 28 days, I got a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). It couldn't have been too severe; I still remembered my childhood experiences of abuse! I got locked up December 16, 1998, just four (4) months after my youngest daughter was born. A big part of the reason being locked up is I was supporting my drug habit. When I got to the Maine Correctional Center, I was told to keep my nose out of trouble & I will get by just fine. I was in a lot of denial; I didn't want to re-surface any buried trauma! NO WAY!!! I did the programs that DOC classification TOLD me to do focused on the crimes I committed. At no time did DOC have someone work with me to help me understand why I behaved the way I did to commit the crime(s). Since then, I have recidivated three (3) times. Including those three times, I have been incarcerated twenty-five years! I was free in society for a total of approximately nine (9) months since 1998.

On June 11, 2010, I was sentenced to 30 years in prison for murder. Before that day, I lived in denial, everyone else had a problem, NOT ME! When I got to the Maine State Prison, DOC for the 4th time, sitting in a cell by my-self on reception, I asked my higher power, Jesus Christ to PLEASE HELP ME UNDERSTAND! I began thinking about the things I have done throughout my life and my thoughts went to the individuals my behaviors demonstrated affected (The One's I Could Remember Anyway) while in the community, in my life! That is something I NEVER done before. Instantly, I started crying and it was so severe, I couldn't stop! In the past, any tear shed was from ME getting "caught" doing something, how "I" was going to be away from the one's "I" cared about. For the first time in my life, I felt TRUE emotion, sorrow, a lot of feelings I didn't know what they meant. How was I going to understand any of this? I didn't have an answer for that. I involved my-self in practically every program I could to help he understand any of it, anything at all!

Since then, with the direction to get to know who I am, why I behaved the way I did, how to address it, what support I needed to help me with it all is what I did. After involving my-self in practically every program I could while in prison focused on TRYING to understand why I behaved in the way(s) I did, the causes of the behaviors I demonstrated surfaced. WOW! How do I deal with this? Education! I enrolled in the University of Maine 2016. Since then, not only do I fully understand the root causes of my behaviors, I have since learned how to help others in my position (Nearly everyone incarcerated) understand themselves through direction. Peer Support, Reentry is my passion! Structure!

I had to learn all this the HARD way, creating victims EVERY TIME! For anyone who is concerned for victims of crime, currently people release with NO UNDERSTANDING of the root causes of their behaviors WILL RE-OFFEND! The focus is ALWAYS on the crime(s) committed and NOT WHY WAS THE CRIME COMMITTED! Parole has structure with individuals in place to help with Peer Support, individuals with lived experience who support ALL who are. Parole will STOP the revolving door! Structure is the most important part of a person in need of support who is incarcerated. Without parole, victims are created and re-victimized practically the day most are released. For these reasons, I support L.D. 178. Thank You!!