

My name is Hannah Tyce, currently residing in Hamden, CT. I grew up in Augusta and attend the University of Maine at Augusta. I am the 2022-23 Maine Policy Scholar for my campus. My research is focusing on, broadly, incarceration issues within the state and policies that the state could adopt to release the burdens on both the state and the individuals with criminal histories.

I am testifying in favor of LD 178 to reinstate parole in Maine.

Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals in the state of Maine have been established as a health equity priority by the Maine Office of Health Equity. Health considerations include a lower life expectancy directionally proportional to the time spent in prison¹, isolation², lack of medical treatment³, and a higher likelihood of contracting a communicable disease⁴, including but not limited to COVID-19. The Maine Department of Corrections, based on investigative journalism, statistics, and anecdotal evidence, does not appear to have rigid oversight mechanisms. Webpages on topics such as release and reentry procedures provide only vague details⁵. In addition, there is no transparency with regard to how pardoning requests are handled in Maine; the Board of Clemency does not report an official number, and past administrations only had their pardons estimated by news outlets⁶.

I trust the courts and I hope you do, too. I trust that during a sentencing hearing, when a judge is presented with a holistic overview of an individual's life up to the moment of the crime, the judge will make an informed choice about whether to grant parole or not. I am in favor of reinstating that option to the courts.

Thank you,

Hannah Tyce

¹ https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2017/06/26/life_expectancy/

² <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2022/03/08/mainefocus/zachary-swain-maine-solitary-confinement-occurs-joam40zk0w/>

³ <https://www.mainepublic.org/health/2021-03-19/residents-who-alleged-poor-medical-care-at-maine-state-prison-say-its-now-improving>

⁴ <https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/incarceration.html#:~:text=Compared%20to%20the%20general%20population,hepatitis%20C18%20and%20tuberculosis.&text=However%2C%20access%20to%20screening%20and,consistently%20available%20in%20many%20prisons>

⁵ <https://www.maine.gov/corrections/programs/reentry><https://www.maine.gov/corrections/programs/reentry>

⁶ <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2013/06/02/news/hundreds-seek-pardons-of-criminal-convictions-in-maine-each-year-but-few-are-granted/>