

Amy Hughes
Kittery
LD 1335

My name is Amy Hughes, I am a resident of Kittery Maine and I am writing to express strong support of LD 1335, "An Act to Prohibit Life Sentences." This bill is a step toward aligning Maine's criminal justice system with the values of human dignity, accountability, and rehabilitation. Life sentences — whether imposed directly or indirectly through extreme terms of years — are inconsistent with what we know about human development, capacity for change, and the principles of restorative justice.

We know from decades of research that people, even those who commit serious offenses, are capable of profound transformation. Maine has historically recognized this truth, which is why we have often emphasized rehabilitation over retribution. LD 1335 would solidify that commitment by ensuring that no person is written off forever, and that every person retains the hope and possibility of returning to their community one day.

Ending life sentences also serves to reduce the racial and economic disparities that have long plagued our justice system. Studies nationwide — and data here in Maine — show that life sentences disproportionately impact people from marginalized backgrounds. This bill would help Maine become a national leader by acknowledging and addressing this inequity head-on.

Importantly, LD 1335 does not prevent courts from imposing serious, lengthy sentences. It simply ensures that every sentence leaves room for the possibility of redemption. Courts will still be able to hold individuals accountable with significant prison terms, while preserving the opportunity for people to demonstrate that they have changed.

Finally, life sentences are not only morally troubling, they are also fiscally irresponsible. Long-term incarceration burdens taxpayers while offering diminishing returns for public safety. LD 1335 offers Maine the opportunity to reinvest in rehabilitation, reentry support, and community resources that will reduce harm and strengthen public safety in the long term.

I urge you to support this bill and help Maine take a powerful step toward a fairer, safer, and more humane criminal justice system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy E. Hughes
Kittery, ME