

In support of LD1941: An Act to Implement Recommendations of the Commission to Examine
Reestablishing Parole

To Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Maleah Chadwick and I am a Maine resident currently enrolled in a degree program to obtain a Masters in Forensic Psychology. My educational pursuits were in part a result of the internal conflict I experienced after publicly encountering the man who was charged with manslaughter in the death of a close friend. At that point, he had served his time and had gone from a teenager to a man almost in his thirties, his brain reaching maturity after having been incarcerated for almost seven years. After nine years, he was thrown back into a world that had moved on without him. His girlfriend throughout the entirety of his teens had married someone else, the building where he had been told a job would be waiting for him was torn down, and the home where he had resided, had been removed with nothing built to replace it. His actions robbed him of time, but time took everything from him.

When I was capable of overcoming the unexpected encounter, I could not help but think of how much of his own life he had lost. I was not filled with the resentment that had seethed through me those many years ago, but instead a profound sympathy. By that point, my education had challenged my beliefs that were rooted in fear as a result of being a secondary victim. What I learned had drastically changed my perspective, opening my eyes to the dangers of failure to actively work towards reintegration. As I have witnessed in both my own life and educational research, evidence indicates that many criminal offenders begin as victims to some capacity. The man who took the life of my friend was no exception, his tumultuous youth pocketed with

traumas and neglect. This overlap between victimization and criminal behavior should be a focus in our efforts to improve the justice system.

Hope is a powerful motivator, and the lack of parole in this state undermines the value of rehabilitative efforts. Parole is a vital tool for addressing overcrowded prisons, reintegrating valuable members of society, and acknowledging the startling number of perpetrators who began as victims. I am an advocate for parole because my education and life experiences have illuminated the importance of working to return rehabilitated individuals to society and restore a sense of normalcy for both offenders and their families. Through utilization of rehabilitative efforts, risk assessment tools, and community participation in reintegration, parole can be utilized to mitigate unnecessarily prolonged incarceration. I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD1941, thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Maleah Chadwick

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