

Good afternoon Senator Carney Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Joel Hayden. I am a resident at Maine State Prison in Warren Maine. I am providing testimony in favor of LD 1941 An Act to Implement Recommendations of the Commission to Examine Reestablishing Parole.

Since being in prison, I have completed and earned 25 certificates from self-help programs and classes. I have facilitated the Challenge Program from 2015 to 2017. Now I facilitate the New Freedom Program. I have been facilitating this program from 2021 to 2025. I am also a volunteer recovery coach working on my 500 hours to become a certified recovery coach. I have been a recovery coach for two years. I also volunteer for the hospice program. I've been volunteering for hospice for a year and a half. I am a college student and have been taking classes for two years at the university of Maine Augusta, working towards earning my bachelors degree, and the intro disciplinary degree program. I am focusing my studies in mental health and human services and justice studies. So many people with mental health and substance use disorders end up in jails and prisons worldwide. Every day I wake up, I strive to become the best version of myself. I also encourage other prisoners to become the best versions of themselves.

I pride myself on being the best man that I can be. Every day is a new opportunity for me to improve my life and help and reach the life of others. I feel like by me being the best version of me it is not only good for me, it is also good for anyone that I encounter in life. I believe that I can be a good used society. I could help my community in so many ways.

My family is affected tremendously by my being incarcerated. I am not able to be there for them and help them get through some of life's struggles. If I was out there with them, I could be a great use to them in so many ways. My mom is 69 years old and she has a bad knee and she lives in a third-floor apartment. If I were out there, I could help her get down the stairs. I could carry her groceries upstairs. My grandmother is 88 years old and she needs help that I cannot provide from prison. Since being in prison, my brother has started his own business as a painter, and he tells me when he talks to me that he can't wait for the day that I will be free so we can work together. I could help my family get through some of their emotional, physical, and financial struggles. My family wants and needs me out there in society with them. I could be a good use by being a recovery coach and a hospice volunteer.

Thank you for your time and attention in reading this letter. I will be hoping and praying that this Bill, LD 1941 gets passed. Take care and God bless.

Respectfully submitted,

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