



January 6, 2026

Senator Carney
Representative Kuhn
Maine Legislature
Committee on Judiciary
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Testimony in support of LD 1941 - An Act to Implement Recommendations of the Commission to Examine Reestablishing Parole

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and the honorary members of the Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Richard A. Hooks Wayman, and I am a resident of Portland, Maine. I have the honor of serving as the President & CEO for VOA Northern New England which is headquartered in Brunswick. VOA Northern New England is a faith-based, community nonprofit that has offered reentry services in Maine for over 30 years and is proud of our partnership with Waldo and Knox Counties through our Maine Coastal Regional Reentry Center in Belfast. We also support incarcerated parents and their children who remain in the community in a partnership with the York County Sheriff's Office.

I write in support of LD 1941 for the re-establishment of parole in Maine. Based on our experience, VOA would argue that parole can be a significant incentive for rehabilitation. Additionally, parole helps to further re-integration of persons back into community life, saves public funding, and supports public safety. By promoting engagement in programming, professional development, and reentry planning, the parole process promotes rehabilitation and provides opportunities to contribute to the community. VOA's ministry has always been grounded in truth, personal accountability, offering second chances and supporting recovery from mental health or substance use disabilities. Further, we believe that after a person has paid their price to society that we should offer them a pathway toward family reunification when appropriate.

Our judicial system should give every incarcerated person ample opportunity to earn release and have a fair, transparent process for deciding whether parole is granted. Our state laws should ensure fairness in how the Department of Corrections identifies who should receive parole, when those individuals should be reviewed and released, and what parole conditions should be attached to those individuals. This bill also helps to balance the rights of the victim and affords them a chance to use their voice in future hearings.

While we recognize the burden and difficulty of deciding which persons are granted parole and which are denied, the establishment of a transparent system rooted in continual training on best practices and accountable for data collection and outcomes, is a system our state should invest in. Justice would be better served if our state re-established a parole system.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am grateful for your public service and leadership.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Hooks Wayman, President & CEO

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