

Farmington, Maine

November 6, 2016

Ms. Kathleen Kiley
Counsel to the Board of Parole
Dept. of Corrections and Community Supervisors
Albany, NY 12226

Re: Need for Parole Revisions in New York

Dear Ms. Kiley:

I understand that current parole rules are up for reconsideration and at this point there is no intent to revise language regarding the parole board taking into account what the prisoner has done to change while incarcerated. It is my understanding that the only point seriously reviewed by the board is the original crime.

Having worked for many years with prisoners as a volunteer extension course supervisor in the Criminon of Maine program, which provides free courses to prisoners in many states, I know that it is possible for people to change. It is my experience that not everyone avails themselves of the opportunity to improve, but that those that do have clearly shown that they do not want to continue on the road to criminality.

Of course, no one would want to release a dangerous person who is likely to harm others or society, and no doubt there are many who would pretend to change to get out and take up the life of crime again, however it should not be difficult to differentiate those from the ones who have put in the time and effort to change.

Some of the prisoners I have worked with have been on courses for years and work hard to learn and better themselves. All I am urging is that those ones who could be productive members of society have earned the right to return to the workforce and should be evaluated on the current person, not the one who may have done something unforgiveable as a young person in the distant past. To do otherwise is saying that one might as well not make any effort to change as it will not be taken into account and result in a better life and make up for the crimes one has committed.

Prison is all too expensive in financial terms and in terms of lost humanity.

I strongly urge you to consider substantive revisions to the rules governing the criteria for releasing inmates who are eligible for parole. Please revise the proposed rules so that they actually reflect that rehabilitation is possible and that those deserving of parole actually can attain it.

Sincerely yours,

Jo-Anne Palmer