

April 26, 2023

To: Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Joint Legislative Judiciary Committee

From: Diane Oltarzewski, on behalf of The Friends (Quaker) Committee on Maine Public Policy  
(I reside in Belfast ME)

Re: LD 848 An Act to Expunge Certain Nonviolent Drug Crimes

For over 30 years, the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy has held as core objectives the promotion of Restorative Justice and the amelioration of Tribal-State Relations.

Today, we express our wholehearted support for LD 848. This bill will grant individuals the right and ability to see their records swept clean of any limiting taint of felony conviction, once they have served out their sentence and steered clear of problem behavior for five years.

Such expungement will level the playing field and enable these individuals to compete in the marketplace based solely on their energy, ambition, skills and talents.

The present moment finds us all caught in a rather absurd situation where a Class 1 drug can be legally purchased for recreation in any number of locations across the country. So there ceases to be any justification for continuing to cripple a person's opportunity to grow into useful employment, and play a constructive role in our society, merely because of prior and non-violent possession of a drug.

More than ever, we need a society peopled by individuals with hopeful prospects, not embittered alienation. Because this bill will help to foster such a society, we urge you to vote unanimously that LD 848 ought to pass.

Thank you.