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Testimony of Meg Helming before  
the Committee on Judiciary  
in opposition to

**LD 1550: An Act to Authorize the Expungement of Records of Nonviolent Crimes**

April 27, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Committee on Judiciary, my name is Meg Helming and I'm the COO for the YMCA Alliance of Northern New England, which represents the 15 YMCAs in Maine. The YMCA opposes LD 1550: *An Act to Authorize the Expungement of Records of Nonviolent Crimes*.

The YMCA serves more than 85,000 Mainers each year through our various programs, 36,000 of which are children under the age of 18. We are the largest childcare provider in the state, providing safe and nurturing care to children in our early childhood education programs, before/after school programs, and day and overnight camp. We take the health and safety of the children in our care incredibly seriously, and implement a variety of strategies to mitigate risk. A critical component of our child safety strategy is conducting criminal background checks during the hiring process. We are concerned about policy changes that may prevent us from being able to identify people that could pose a serious risk to our program participants, especially youth.

We ask the Committee to think of our organization and others that work with vulnerable populations when considering the potential implication of policy changes around sealing or expunging criminal records. While this bill specifies that certain crimes are not eligible for expungement, our understanding of the crimes that would be eligible remain concerning for us, including aggravated OUI, felony theft, and aggravated criminal mischief.

Thank you for taking our concerns into consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

YMCA Alliance of Northern New England

Maine YMCAs:

Auburn-Lewiston YMCA • Bangor Region YMCA • Bath Area Family YMCA • Boothbay Region YMCA • Central Lincoln County YMCA • Down East Family YMCA • Kennebec Valley YMCA • Mount Desert Island YMCA • Old Town-Orono YMCA • Penobscot Bay YMCA • Sanford-Springvale YMCA • State YMCA of Maine • Waldo County YMCA • YMCA of Greater Waterville • YMCA of Southern Maine

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