



MAINE ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

P.O. Box 17642
Portland, ME 04112-8642
(207) 523-9869
mainemacdl@gmail.com

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March 15, 2024

Senator Anne Carey
Representative Matt Moonen
Committee on Judiciary
100 State House Station, Room 438
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 2218 “An Act to Remove the Age-related Statutory Prerequisite for Sealing Criminal History Record Information.”

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

MACDL **supports** LD 2218.

LD 2218 seeks to expand the sealing process under 15 M.R.S. § 2261, et seq. by removing the existing requirement that a petitioner seeking to seal his or her Class E conviction must have been 27 years or younger at the time of commission of the original offense.

A sealed conviction is critical for many people to get meaningful employment. All too many employers run background checks and remove applicants from consideration based on a minor criminal record that is years old. People are greater than the worst mistake they made and deserve a true second chance.

A criminal record may also affect loan and housing applications. There are already too many barriers for poorer people in Maine without adding the life-long stigma of a criminal conviction.

Although MACDL supports LD 2218, it also encourages this committee to consider future recommendations to expand sealing relief beyond the limited Class E crimes listed as eligible convictions in 15 M.R.S. § 2261(6). In particular this committee should consider any future bills that expand sealing or expungement relief to non-violent drug possession crimes when those convicted persons have turned their lives around.

Expungement and/or sealing laws are some of the most effective and important tools to encourage and reward rehabilitation for people convicted of crimes. These laws create an equality of opportunity in employment and housing while also recognizing the importance of dignity and self-respect for people that can truly change themselves for the better.

For these reasons, MACDL supports LD 2218.

Sincerely,

/s/ Matthew D. Morgan

Matthew D. Morgan, Esq.
MACDL President-Elect