

**Testimony in support of LD 1856
to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary**

May 12, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Sarah Johnson and I am a resident of Sanford.

I am writing in support of LD 1856 An Act Directing the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services to Assist Persons Filing Post-judgment Motions to Seal Criminal History Record Information.

The legislature created and supports the Criminal Records Review Committee, and I am grateful for this. LD 1856 implements an important recommendation of this committee that will help individuals avoid the long term harmful consequences of public access to criminal records. Continued public access to criminal records is an unjust extension of a sentence that has been completed. For those who are eligible to have their records sealed, the process is challenging and I thank the Criminal Records Review Committee for recognizing that. The development of procedures to assist those individuals is an obligation I feel we all have to assist individuals in their reentry process. This benefits individuals, families and communities.

There is a national movement for these types of ‘clean slate’ policies and I appreciate the work the Criminal Records Review Committee is doing to advance them in Maine. As noted by [The Clean Slate Initiative](#): *“One in three people in America has an arrest or conviction record. Yet even after serving their time and paying their debt to society, many are denied a true second chance, facing significant barriers to education, housing, and employment. While each state has a way to seal eligible records through a petition process, it is often complex and costly to do so – deterring millions of people eligible under current expungement laws from pursuing this process. These challenges extend beyond individuals, creating a ripple effect that impacts families, weakens communities, and hinders economic growth.”*

LD1856 will assist our neighbors who are eligible to have their records sealed and avoid further harmful impact. I hope you will support the Criminal Records Review Committee recommendation by supporting LS 1856.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson
Sanford, Maine

<https://www.cleanslateinitiative.org/understanding-the-issue>