



**STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
MAINE STATE POLICE**

**Colonel William Ross
CHIEF**

**LTC Brian Scott
DEPUTY CHIEF**

**TESTIMONY OF MATTHEW RUEL
DIRECTOR, STATE BUREAU OF IDENTIFICATION**

Neither for nor Against LD 1871

Members of the Committee:

My name is Matthew Ruel, and I am the Director of the State Bureau of Identification within the Department of Public Safety. I provide this testimony on behalf of the Administration Neither for nor against LD 1871.

SBI serves as the repository of all criminal history information in the state and provides criminal history records for law enforcement and public purposes based on statutory guidelines. We are responsible for providing this information to law enforcement across the country, from the officer roadside through the criminal justice process up to judges making sentencing decisions. SBI responds on behalf of all criminal justice agencies in the state with a complete criminal history. Criminal history is also used as part of hiring, certification, and licensing requirements on a state and national level. Many organizations rely on this information to vet potential employees or volunteers that have direct contact with vulnerable populations. SBI completes more than 500,000 public searches annually, in addition to every law enforcement transaction. Having an accurate, complete, timely criminal history is our mission and a key component in public safety.

I provide this testimony Neither for Nor Against LD 1871. There are two key parts to this LD. The first part addresses a “business screening service” who would be engaged in collecting, assembling, evaluating, and disseminating criminal history records for a fee. This LD would require the company to only disseminate complete and accurate records. SBI, as the state repository of records, is always updating our records based on information we receive from other sources. A criminal history record is “stale” the second it is run, so any attempt to have entities outside of SBI make sure the record they sell is up to date is vital.

The second part of this LD is much like numerous sealing bills this session and found in past sessions. This particular sealing action focuses on sealing records for victims of sex trafficking or sexual exploitation where the person was convicted of a crime that was a result of the sex trafficking or sexual exploitation. This would follow the existing sealing process already established in statute where SBI would receive a sealing order from the court and limit dissemination for public requests accordingly. Like the other attempts to seal records we view this as a policy decision and will implement whatever legislative action is passed.

If there is any further information needed or questions I can answer, please let me know and I will do my best to provide it to the committee for any work session.