

Written Testimony in Support of Maine's Clean Slate Legislation

To the Members of the Committee,

My name is Pam Maus, and I am writing in support of Maine's Clean Slate legislation.

At this stage of my life, sealing my own criminal record would make little difference to me personally. I am here not out of self-interest, but out of concern for fairness and the long-term consequences our justice system imposes on people who have already paid their debt to society.

Clean Slate is not about excusing wrongdoing or eliminating accountability. Accountability is essential to justice—but it must have an endpoint. When individuals have completed their sentence, paid their fines, and complied with probation or court-ordered conditions, the punishment should end. Without that endpoint, we impose an ongoing, informal sentence that was never ordered by a judge.

I am currently working on a documentary focused on Maine's Clean Slate initiative, and through that work I have listened to people whose lives continue to be shaped by low-level convictions from years or even decades ago. Again and again, I hear how an old record—often for a misdemeanor or lower-level felony—creates barriers to employment, housing, education, and economic stability. These barriers are not applied equally. People with fewer resources, less access to legal counsel, or limited support systems suffer the harshest and longest-lasting consequences.

This is not only a question of individual fairness; it is a matter of public interest. Stable housing and steady employment are among the strongest predictors of reduced recidivism. Policies that prevent people from working or securing housing after they have completed their sentences do not enhance public safety—they undermine it. Maine benefits when people are able to support themselves, contribute to their communities, and move forward with dignity.

Clean Slate reflects core Maine values: personal responsibility, fairness, and the belief in second chances. It does not erase the past; it recognizes that people can and do change, and that our laws should not permanently trap individuals in their worst moment.

I may not personally benefit from this legislation, but many working-age Mainers will. For them, Clean Slate can determine whether they ever receive a fair opportunity to rebuild their lives. I respectfully urge you to support passage of Maine's Clean Slate legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Pam Maus
Owls Head, ME

December 23, 2025