

Testimony in Support of LD 1911
An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes

December 29, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Hepler, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Paul Vinsel, and I am a resident of West Bath, Me. I am writing in strong support of LD 1911 *An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes*.

I am an addiction medicine physician, recently retired from working at Spurwink, and Central Maine Medical Center. Many of my patients have a criminal record which makes it very difficult for them to obtain housing and employment. Most of my patients were in stable recovery and had not used non-prescribed substances for many years. Despite this, their past legal involvement decreased their ability to improve their living situations. They were eliminated from many jobs, and much of the available housing. This affected my patients, as well as their families.

One of my patients was losing his job as his employer was closing the factory and moving it to Washington state. My patient was unable to apply for jobs that he was interested in and qualified for because of his history of legal involvement. Because of this he was searching for ways to obtain a pardon. He found a website that promised him a pardon if he would pay \$10,000. I was very concerned he would fall for this scam. If LD 1911 is enacted he would have much more opportunity for good employment and thus be able to improve quality of life for himself and his family.

In 2022, the Legislature created a process to allow people to petition the courts to seal certain misdemeanor records. The intent was good; however, the reality is this system has not worked for most Mainers. The petition process is confusing, time-consuming, and intimidating. Many people don't even know they are eligible. Others cannot afford the attorney or cannot take time off work to go to court. The result is the relief exists on paper, but few people can access it.

25% of Mainers have a criminal history. People with substance use disorder have a higher incidence of judicial involvement. My patients are in recovery, have served their sentence and are trying to improve their lives. LD 1911 would break down barriers for those that have earned a second chance. It does not erase records or compromise

public safety. Law enforcement and courts would still have access to the records. Only people who have remained conviction-free for many years are eligible, and serious offenses are excluded.

I urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1911. Show that Maine respects accountability, hard work, and second chances.

Sincerely,

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