



January 8, 2026

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

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary,

The [Responsible Business Initiative for Justice \(RBIJ\)](#) is an award-winning international nonprofit that works with companies to champion solutions that promote public safety, deliver justice, and strengthen communities. Since its inception, RBIJ has collaborated with companies of all sizes across two dozen states to advocate for practical policy reforms that expand workforce opportunities and stimulate economic growth. **In line with these priorities, we write today to respectfully express our support for LD 1911: An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes. Otherwise known as Clean Slate Maine, this legislation would strengthen the economy, expand the talent pool for businesses, and give hardworking Mainers a meaningful second chance.**

Approximately one in four adults in Maine have some form of a criminal record. For these individuals, this can create a lifetime of lost opportunities and economic exclusion. The challenges in finding and retaining employment are particularly severe: [nine in ten employers](#) currently use background checks to screen applicants, and having a record – even one that is minor or decades-old – reduces an otherwise-qualified job seeker’s chance of getting a callback [by nearly 50 percent](#). While record sealing processes exist, they are complicated, burdensome, and seldom accessed. Nationally, [less than five percent](#) of eligible individuals receive their entitled sealing. The result is costly to businesses and communities alike.

Clean Slate legislation would remove these barriers – and local businesses would benefit. As the legislature knows, many businesses across Maine are facing ongoing labor shortages. As companies look to fill these vacancies, we should be working to ensure that people who want these jobs and have paid their dues to society can enter the workforce. Clean Slate would provide much-needed relief for companies desperately trying to hire and, according to a poll conducted by Small Business Majority, [84% of small business owners agree](#) that it would unlock new pipelines of loyal, hardworking talent. Clean Slate is an opportunity for job growth that Maine simply cannot afford to pass up.

Passage of Clean Slate would also strengthen Maine’s economy. Estimates indicate that the underemployment of people with records costs the United States more than [\\$87 billion in lost productivity](#). A study in Michigan found that automatic record sealing increases wages by more than [20 percent within one year alone](#). That’s more money in the pockets of consumers and back into local businesses. Removing barriers to employment also reduces the need for government assistance, saving taxpayer dollars and increasing prosperity.

And if the jobs and economic growth potential isn't reason enough to support Clean Slate, the benefit to public safety is key. One of the most important factors in whether someone will reoffend is their employment status. Reducing unnecessary barriers allows more companies to recruit employees into long-term and sustaining jobs, thereby reducing recidivism. By making Maine a safer place to live and work, the state can continue to attract new talent, new employers, and new investments.

Clean Slate policies have garnered support from multinational corporations, mid-sized businesses, small enterprises, and Chambers of Commerce nationwide. Companies have seen firsthand how automatic record sealing strengthens the communities they serve while also benefiting their bottom line. Maine needs legislation that meets the needs of its workers and its businesses – and LD 1911 does just that. We respectfully encourage the legislature to take this opportunity to pass this common-sense legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Maggie O'Donnell
Director of Policy & Advocacy
Responsible Business Initiative for Justice
maggie@rbij.org
202-934-5573