January 06, 2026

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

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

My name is Kinna Thakarar, and I am writing to **support LD 1911.** I am an addiction medicine and infectious disease (ID) physician at MaineHealth. I have been practicing medicine for 17 years, have lived in Maine for a decade, and deeply care about our community. I currently serve on several national task forces for ID and addiction professional societies, have presented nationally and internationally on ID/substance use issues, and am the principal investigator of two federally funded and state-funded overdose prevention grants.

In Maine, about 25% of adults live with a past legal record, or more than 271,000 people, creating lasting barriers to jobs, housing, and education that remain long after serving their sentence. **Many of these records are for low-level, nonviolent offenses that continue to limit access to jobs, housing, and education long after sentences are served.** I have sadly seen community partners that I work with, and patients that I care for, struggle with this issue. While many of the community partners I work with are still doing amazing work & keeping people healthy and safe despite these barriers, many other individuals struggle to find work, housing, and food security. As a researcher, we also face barriers in terms of who we can hire, even if they are a good fit for the job.

As a person of color, I think it is important to consider the racial disparities that occur without full and automatic sealing. **Automated record sealing can remedy some of the consequences that result from Black and low-income Mainers being disparately affected by conviction records.** According to data from the Prison *Policy Institute*, Black people in Maine are incarcerated at a rate 9.2 times higher than white people. Automating the process reduces racial and economic disparities to relief.

 For the reasons listed above, among several other reasons which I am sure will be discussed today, I urge you to vote "ought to pass" for LD1911.

Thank you for your time, and I am available for any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kinna Thakarar
MaineHealth
Cape Elizabeth, ME