CAMPFIRE

January 8, 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1911, Clean Slate Maine

Dear Members of the Joint Judiciary Committee,

My name is Benn Marine, and I am the Director of Communications and Impact at Campfire Consulting, a media strategy agency that is proud to call Maine home. I write to you today in support of Clean Slate Maine (LD 1911), legislation that would strengthen the economy, expand the talent pool for businesses looking to hire, and perhaps most importantly, give hardworking Mainers a meaningful second chance.

One in three Americans, and nearly 300,000 Mainers, has some form of a criminal or arrest record. Unfortunately, a criminal record can be a lifelong barrier to employment, housing, education, and economic stability. These collateral consequences don't just impact an individual – they also affect families, communities, and employers alike.

Clean Slate legislation would change that. By making record sealing automated after a period of time, Clean Slate would remove a major barrier to employment and open new pipelines of dedicated, talented workers. Despite historically low unemployment, companies across Maine still have open positions that need to be filled by qualified applicants. Clean Slate would give employers access to an overlooked and underutilized workforce, helping to ease labor shortages and reduce turnover costs.

The economic benefits are too great to ignore. Estimates indicate that the United States loses more than $80 billion in GDP each year due to the underemployment of people with records. A study in Michigan found that automatic record sealing

increases wages by 22% within the first year, putting more money back into the pockets of consumers and community members and ultimately creating a stronger economy for the commonwealth.

Clean Slate would also reduce recidivism and increase public safety. Access to stable employment is widely considered to be one of the strongest predictors of recidivism. Moreover, individuals who have their records sealed are less likely to commit an offense than the general population as a whole. By reducing barriers to employment for people with records, skilled workers who are ready to work can finally contribute to the workforce.

At Campfire Consulting, we believe in leaving the world a little better than we found it. It's this commitment that compelled us to recertify as a B Corporation last year and what compels us to support Clean Slate today. Our commitment isn't just a tagline – it's woven into everything we do. People are more than their mistakes, and they deserve the opportunity to get a clean slate and rejoin their communities. As a business leader and a Mainer, I applaud the sponsors of these bills for their efforts to make Maine an even better place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Benn Marine

Director of Communications & Impact

Campfire Consulting

Benn Marine
Cumberland
LD 1911

January 8, 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1911, Clean Slate Maine

Dear Members of the Joint Judiciary Committee,

My name is Benn Marine, and I am the Director of Communications and Impact at Campfire Consulting, a media strategy agency that is proud to call Maine home. I write to you today in support of Clean Slate Maine (LD 1911), legislation that would strengthen the economy, expand the talent pool for businesses looking to hire, and perhaps most importantly, give hardworking Mainers a meaningful second chance.

One in three Americans, and nearly 300,000 Mainers, has some form of a criminal or arrest record. Unfortunately, a criminal record can be a lifelong barrier to employment, housing, education, and economic stability. These collateral consequences don't just impact an individual – they also affect families, communities, and employers alike.

Clean Slate legislation would change that. By making record sealing automated after a period of time, Clean Slate would remove a major barrier to employment and open new pipelines of dedicated, talented workers. Despite historically low unemployment, companies across Maine still have open positions that need to be filled by qualified applicants. Clean Slate would give employers access to an overlooked and underutilized workforce, helping to ease labor shortages and reduce turnover costs.

The economic benefits are too great to ignore. Estimates indicate that the United States loses more than $80 billion in GDP each year due to the underemployment of people with records. A study in Michigan found that automatic record sealing increases wages by 22% within the first year, putting more money back into the pockets of consumers and community members and ultimately creating a stronger economy for the commonwealth.

Clean Slate would also reduce recidivism and increase public safety. Access to stable employment is widely considered to be one of the strongest predictors of recidivism. Moreover, individuals who have their records sealed are less likely to commit an offense than the general population as a whole. By reducing barriers to employment for people with records, skilled workers who are ready to work can finally contribute to the workforce.

At Campfire Consulting, we believe in leaving the world a little better than we found it. It's this commitment that compelled us to recertify as a B Corporation last year and what compels us to support Clean Slate today. Our commitment isn't just a tagline – it's woven into everything we do. People are more than their mistakes, and they deserve the opportunity to get a clean slate and rejoin their communities. As a business leader and a Mainer, I applaud the sponsors of these bills for their efforts to make Maine an even better place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Benn Marine
Director of Communications & Impact
Campfire Consulting