

Kerry Read
Paris
LD 1911

Senator Anne Carney, Representative Amy Kuhn and members of the Judiciary committee,

I am testifying in support of LD 1911.

My Unitarian Universalist faith calls for justice and equity to walk hand in hand with compassion and forgiveness. What would this world be like if every one of us that has ever broken a law was branded for life with a criminal record that kept them from being able to get a job, find a place to live and step out of their past into a promising future. Offering a Clean Slate after a period of time without new offenses, for misdemeanors and low-level convictions, gives a person a second chance to get it right. Without the opportunity to be free of the stigma of being convicted, any person, but especially those without family money and support don't have a lot of choices about how to support themselves. It is notable that in those states that currently practice Clean Slate sealing of criminal records, the recidivism rates are drastically lower than in Maine.

If we want people to be able to rise above their past, we have to take the lid off the pressure cooker. It is impossible to thrive in a system that won't let you forget you once made a mistake.

Please vote ought to pass on LD 1911 and make life just a little easier for those who are really trying to do the right thing.