

Testimony in Support of LD 1911

An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is April Tardiff, and I live in Old Orchard Beach, Maine. I am here today testifying on behalf of myself and so many others who have earned the chance at a clean slate. I am a parent to a four-year-old, a college student, and someone who was incarcerated for five years nearly nine years ago.

I am here in strong support of LD 1911.

I grew up in a home marked by violence and abuse. For fourteen years, my stepfather was mentally and physically abusive to both my mother and me. Escaping that environment was not easy. As a teenager, I ran away and began rebelling, simply trying to survive.

At fifteen years old, I got into a car with a man twice my age who was intoxicated. My fourteen-year-old best friend was with me. That ride turned into a high-speed chase that ended in a deadly crash. I woke up with my best friend lifeless in my arms. After that trauma, I was prescribed opioids at a young age, and my life spiraled into addiction and an unsafe relationship.

Those choices eventually led me to prison at the age of twenty-seven. What is important to know is that I had already gotten sober a year before my felony charge, and I have remained sober ever since. For almost 15 years now, I have worked hard to rebuild my life and be a productive, contributing member of my community.

But even after nearly a decade of doing everything right, my past continues to follow me.

I was approved to work with Early Head Start, completed all required trainings, and was cleared to work with children — only to be denied because of my criminal record. My dream is to work with young children and support families, yet my record continues to close doors that should be opening.

Housing has also been a major barrier. Finding a rental in Portland with a felony record meant needing a roommate willing to take responsibility for “the felon they lived with.” Experiences like this make people who have worked incredibly hard to change feel permanently punished for mistakes made while surviving trauma.

LD 1911 would change lives in ways that are not always visible. It would mean fair access to housing, employment, and education. It would mean dignity. For me, it could mean finally

working in early childhood education — and showing my son that growth, accountability, and perseverance truly matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story and for considering the passage of LD 1911.

Sincerely,
April Tardiff

April A Tardiff
Old Orchard Beach
LD 1911

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