

MAINE ACCESS POINTS

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

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Mikki Rice and I am the Director of Overdose Prevention at Maine Access Points, an organization that works directly with individuals who have living and/or lived experience of substance use, incarceration, poverty and homelessness. I am writing this testimony on behalf of Maine Access Points, in support of **LD 1911: An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes.**

We do not allow employers and landlords to discriminate against Mainers for race, color, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age or genetic information, yet we do allow them to discriminate based on criminal record. When someone is found guilty of a crime, they are given a sentence by a qualified judge for that crime. When they finish the sentence they are given (whether a fine, community service, probation, jail time, etc...) the person has paid their dues that the judge deemed fair. Yet when someone has a criminal record, they can legally be discriminated against by employers, landlords, and anyone that has the ability to run a criminal background check.

1 in 4 Mainers have a criminal record and many of them are working hard to contribute to their families and communities. Unfortunately their criminal record makes it harder (and sometimes nearly impossible) to get education, stable employment, stable housing, and to gain financial stability. Having a criminal record reduces the chance of a call back from an employer by 50%. According to the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law, the average lifetime loss of income for someone who is imprisoned in the United States as a young adult is between \$267K and \$511K. These barriers and loss of income not only affect the person with the criminal record, but also their family and community.

By passing LD 1911 we could help an estimated 163,000 Mainers by giving them the second chance that they have earned. Many Mainers already qualify for record sealing, but the current process is underused, complex and requires time, money, and legal help which many Mainers do not have. LD 1911 would put a system in place to automatically seal their record once certain criteria are met and a certain amount of time has passed (5-15 years depending on the crime) so that people aren't left behind

The research shows that people who have sealed records are no more likely to reoffend than those without criminal convictions, and in fact, criminal record sealing would most likely decrease recidivism because people are more likely to gain stable employment and housing.

We urge you to pass LD 1911 and give Mainers with a criminal record a chance to thrive and contribute to our communities.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony,



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