

Joseph Jackson
Lisbon falls
LD 1911

Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC)
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To: Judiciary Committee Members

Date: January 8, 2026

Fm: Joseph Jackson: MPAC Executive Director

Re: letter in support LD 1911 - An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History
Record Information for Certain Crimes

Senator Anne Carney

Representative Amy Kuhn

Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee

My name is Joseph Jackson, and I'm the Executive Director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC), and I am the Co-Executive Director of Maine Inside Out. I was a member of the criminal records review committee. I'm a system-impacted individual who spent over 20 years in the Maine Department of Corrections.

As a member of the criminal records review committee. We spent a lot of time talking about the steps an individual must take to try to get their records sealed. One thing was clear: there are collateral consequences to being a convicted felon.

In MPAC and MIO our work with system-impacted youth and adults you can't help but see how public access to criminal records creates barriers for people in housing and employment and other things that matter. And that these barriers are in place for the rest of their lives.

There's one young man in particular that comes to mind and I won't say his name. I started working with him when he got out of Long Creek. He was one of those youths that had to stay in LongCreek till his 18th or 19th birthday. He got out full of hope, he looked forward to connecting to our community programming, and engaging in positive activities within the Community. Shortly after his release, he got a job at UPS.

He was so excited about that job, the first real good job that he's had in his life. 2 weeks in and his boss was telling him how great a job he was doing. But then the background check came back and it was fired.

That firing was a turning point, that young man returned to the streets with no real hope of finding meaningful employment. To this day he's been in and out of prison. Imagine, if he were able to maintain that job.

I too experienced how my criminal record impacted my ability to get housing. When I was released a family took me in and allowed me to live with them rent free for 3 years. I was able to save money, finished my education and looked for my first place to stay. It became clear after a short period of time that there was a mysterious woman that always got the place before me. It took purchasing my own home to finally find safe and stable housing.

What happened to me and the young man in the story that I just shared is something that happens to many Mainers.

MPAC and MIO's work to build communities of support for system-impacted people to overcome these lifetime barriers isn't enough. Please vote ought to pass LD 1911 - An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Joseph N. Jackson : Executive Director

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