

Testimony in support of LD 1919 to the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

January 12, 2026

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Johnson, and I am a Sanford resident writing in support of LD 1919, An Act to Expand the Types of Convictions Eligible for Sealing Through a Post-judgment Motion to Seal Criminal History Record Information.

By implementing recommendations of the Criminal Records Review Committee, this bill will reduce barriers to successful re-entry while maintaining public safety and community well-being.

Research presented in this [Thurgood Marshall Institute](#) report describes the depth of harm that criminal history record information causes individuals, families and communities.

“... denying housing opportunities to people with prior criminal legal contact results in an increased risk of housing insecurity and homelessness for them and for their families. Formerly incarcerated people are nearly ten times as likely to be [homeless](#) compared with the general public.

Housing insecurity and homelessness are associated with serious physical health, mental health, economic, and safety consequences. People experiencing homelessness have higher rates of physical illness, mental illness, and substance use disorders. Housing insecurity and homelessness can also make it more difficult for formerly incarcerated people to secure and maintain work or educational opportunities. Additionally, because of laws that criminalize homelessness and poverty (e.g., vagrancy laws, trespassing laws, etc.), housing insecurity increases the risk that someone will be rearrested for quality-of-life offenses and face future criminal legal contact, fueling a cycle of criminalization and housing insecurity. People who are homeless are eleven times more likely to be arrested than people who are housed.”¹

There is vast research showing that [stability reduces recidivism](#). I think LD 1919, as well as 1916, 1917 and 1918 are all about public health. We are all safer and healthier, mentally and physically, when we are **all** able to secure housing, employment, education, and have a sense of community.

¹ <https://tminstituteldf.org/criminal-background-checks-housing-barrier/#part3>
https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/AG-2020/6-07_Housing-Access-for-People-with-Criminal-Records.pdf
[https://www.ajpmfocus.org/article/S2773-0654\(22\)00041-4/fulltext](https://www.ajpmfocus.org/article/S2773-0654(22)00041-4/fulltext)
<https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/no-access-to-justice.pdf>

People who have served their sentences and demonstrated redemption and rehabilitation have earned the chance to move forward without being permanently defined and hindered by their past.

I hope you vote “Ought To Pass” on LD 1919, as well as LD 1016, 1917 and 1918.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson

Sanford, Maine.

<https://tminstituteldf.org/criminal-background-checks-housing-barrier/#part3>

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>

<https://cjl.sog.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Research-On-the-Effectiveness-of-Reentry-Treatments-FINAL.pdf>