

# Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



*Peter M. Lehman, PhD*

20 Lawrence Ave.  
Thomaston, Maine 04861  
(207) 542-1496  
Peter@GrowInME.com

## **Testimony in Support of LD 1918 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 Peter Lehman and I live in Thomaston. I am a formerly incarcerated citizen and a person in long-term recovery.\* I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition, promoting restorative practices to increase public safety and the health of our communities.

As you are well aware, **any criminal conviction is a life sentence**. With recent development of cheap and easy access to criminal records, and the development of “Business Screening Services” making money using them, any criminal record follows a person like a shadow, haunting their efforts to find work, find housing, and even find recreation.

This is even worse, when there is NOT a criminal conviction—when the crime has not been pled and proved in Court but nonetheless shows up in a public criminal history.

The situations this bill is concerned with are when a plea bargain has been reached and the original charge dismissed. It also clarifies the situation where a plea is accepted even though the charge was dismissed as part of a deferred disposition.

This is an attempt to be fair to the defendant while maintaining the integrity of the judicial record. We believe it is successful.

We urge you to support LD 1918.

I will be happy to answer any questions.

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\* In the interest of honesty and disclosure, a personal background statement is available on request.