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

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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 bill is about ALLOWING post judgement motions sealing criminal history records. It does NOT mandate sealing. It simply broadens the scope of possible motions and clarifies some issues around multiple sealings.

The issues, however, are the same—the issue of lifetime punishment through criminal records. As before, it tries to be fair to the defendant while maintaining the integrity of the judicial record.

We urge you to support LD 1919.

I will be happy to try to answer any questions.

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