

Testimony of Joe Whitmore

In support of LD 1922, An Act to Support Workforce Development for Families That Were Involved in Child Protective Activities by Requiring the Sealing of Certain Records
To the Health and Human Services Committee

January 27, 2026

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyers, and members of the committee. My name is Joe Whitmore. I was involved with CPS in March of 2020. I was struggling then and didn't even know it. Since being reunited with my child in December 2020, I have not had any further CPS involvement.

I am now recognized in my community and beyond as a voice for fathers. I facilitate a program that supports fathers. I table events for child abuse prevention and awareness. I have been involved with state, regional, and national efforts to bring parent voice and experience to efforts to transform the child welfare system. I try to do this work to offer hope and to build communities that strengthen families. I am able to be open, honest and transparent about my own experience as I support other families involved with CPS.

With all these accomplishments and personal growth and progress, I am still unable to support my child in school. I cannot volunteer as a helper, have lunch with him, or attend field trips. It has been almost 6 years, and even though I am known personally and professionally now as someone who can be trusted, I cannot be there in all the ways my son needs or wants me to be.

I am in full support of this bill. The current registry process prevents parents from opportunities for work and volunteering that support their whole family's success. This bill presents an opportunity to acknowledge that parents can and do change, and they deserve to not have the circumstances in their past be a barrier to their future success. I hope my short three minutes here today speaks to how parents can change and show up for their families and communities.

Thank you.