



**STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
MAINE STATE POLICE**

**COL JOHN E. COTE
CHIEF**

**LTC WILLIAM S. HARWOOD
DEPUTY CHIEF**

**TESTIMONY OF MATTHEW RUEL
DIRECTOR, STATE BUREAU OF IDENTIFICATION**

**Testimony Neither for Nor Against on LD's 764, 776, 846, 991,
1113, 1670**

Senator Carpenter, Representative Bailey, Members of the Committee:

My name is Matthew Ruel, and I am the Director of the State Bureau of Identification at the Department of Public Safety. I present this testimony on behalf of the Department as neither for nor against LD 764, 776, 846, 991, 1113, 1670.

SBI serves as the repository of all criminal history information in the state, and currently provides criminal history for law enforcement and public purposes. I see this bill along with the other "sealing" bills being presented today as a major public policy shift. Each bill is different, but all contain some form of record sealing process. I believe that all of them require more time to research, study, and discuss before we make such comprehensive changes to public policy. I believe that bringing together a group of stakeholders to discuss all the potential changes and their anticipated impact would greatly benefit this process. Please consider my criminal history presentation as well as a few other factors as you prepare to vote.

- Various pieces of criminal history are available on the web and from other sources regardless of any restrictions you may place on SBI.
- Preventing SBI from sharing information can adversely impact individuals. We often deal with calls regarding confusion about what people are reading for public information, and this would prevent us from explaining/correcting misunderstandings.
- Agencies make decisions for "positions of trust" (DOE, day care, adoption, nursing care, so on) and would be blind to an individual's history.

- Lookbacks of 3 and 7 years are arbitrary and should be based upon research. Are there other factors to consider? If a record is sealed what does that mean? What are other states doing?
- How does this information impact NICs?
- How does sealing a record impact the DV community other victims of crimes?
- There are numerous federal requirements requiring criminal history checks for certain employment. How will this impact employment, certification, federal funding, reciprocity?

For these reasons and many others, the Administration suggests taking a more holistic approach to this and the other criminal history bills. We would ask the committee to combine all the criminal history bills, convene a commission to come up with recommendations, and come back next session with a comprehensive recommendation to be considered. I would be happy to attend work sessions, and work with the committee as needed. I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me, thank you.