

# Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



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## **Testimony Neither for Nor Against LD 848 and LD 1550 to the Committee on the Judiciary**

April 27, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, 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 whose goal is to promote restorative practices in order to increase public safety and the health of our community.

The way our legal system works, a court delivers a sentence. In my case that was six years in prison and four years' probation.

But that's not the way it **actually** works. The reality is that I received a life sentence.

The debt is never marked "paid" and criminal sentences go on forever because of public criminal records. In my case, hitting a stone wall in employment and in housing because of my criminal record.

In my work with the Prisoner Advocacy Coalition and the Reentry Network, I have worked with literally hundreds of returning citizens and have seen this struggle over and over again.

In employment. In housing. Even in access to recovery centers and other services. Did you know that a felony record disqualifies you from Match.com?

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