



The Maine Coalition
to End Domestic Violence

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**Testimony of Andrea Mancuso on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
In Support of LD 1622: “Resolve, to Reestablish the Criminal Records Review Committee”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Thursday, April 27, 2023**

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, I am writing on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV)¹ to provide our perspective on LD 1622, “Resolve, to Reestablish the Criminal Records Review Committee.”

We appreciate the desire for changes to the criminal legal system in our state and have welcomed being included in these important conversations. As leaders contemplate what actions should be taken to limit the collateral consequences of criminal convictions, careful thought must be given both to unintended consequences and the criminal legal system’s accountability to victims of crime. Conversations convened by through various committees and working groups over the last several years have highlighted that attempting to categorize which crimes we are most concerned about and which we are not, as well as what processes should be utilized to give convicted individuals some form of relief from long-term economic and social consequences of their convictions is complex and does not readily lend itself to simple solutions. The approach of continuing to convene a broad range of interested parties to work through these issues is one we ask you to support.

However, we would again ask you to consider that the timeframe proposed is not likely to result in thoughtful recommendations that fully address the scope of issues the Committee is asked to work on. This timeframe has been tried unsuccessfully before; the Committee doesn’t start its work until mid-Fall, must wrap it up by early December, and this results in needing to come back with repeated requests for the Committee be reconstituted to finish the work, as there are issues that the Committee doesn’t even begin to look at. The issues are not simple, and if the goal is for the group to report back with some sort of comprehensive proposal that thoughtfully addresses the long-term collateral consequences of criminal convictions, as opposed to continued attempts to address the issues piecemeal, it needs more time.

¹ MCEDV serves a membership of eight regional domestic violence resource centers as well as the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine. Our member programs provided services to more than 12,000 victims of domestic abuse and violence in Maine last year, including court advocacy services in the civil and criminal courts to more than 5,000.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective with you. MCEDV and our member programs are available to support the Committee's work on this proposal in whatever way might be helpful.

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