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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Thursday, April 27th, 2023

*Testimony of Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross presenting*  
***LD 1622 Resolve, To Reestablish the Criminal Records Review Committee***  
*Before the Joint Select Committee on the Judiciary*

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, I am Rachel Talbot Ross. I represent House District 118 which is the Portland peninsula. I also have the distinct honor of serving as the Maine Speaker of the House. I am here today to present **LD 1622, a Resolve to Reestablish the Criminal Records Review Committee.**

In 2021, I introduced **LD 563, a Resolve To Create the Criminal Records Review Committee.** That resolve passed both Chambers and was signed by the Chief Executive in July of 2021. The committee was charged with reviewing the issues involved in sealing and expunging criminal records and exploring options to ensure that persons who have been convicted of crimes and served their sentences are able to return to their communities without their convictions holding them back from leading successful, fulfilling lives, while also protecting and advancing public safety.

The committee met five times during the fall of 2021. I have attached a copy of the review committee's report, absent the appendices, to this testimony. The full report with its appendices can be found at <https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/7761> . The review committee made three recommendations, the first of which was to reestablish the review committee in 2022 so that it could continue its work.

Therefore, I introduced **LD 1818, Resolve, To Reestablish and Continue the Work of the Criminal Records Review Committee** in late 2021 to advance that recommendation. A majority of review committee members voted to support LD 1818 as a way to continue this important work. Unfortunately, LD 1818 died when the Legislature adjourned *Sine Die* and was placed in the Legislative Files. LD 1622 is identical to the resolve that died last year except that the date for submitting its report to this Committee along with its findings and recommendations has been changed to December 6, 2023.

There are many reasons why this review committee should be reestablished. These are complex issues, in large part due to the numerous systems involved, and they deserve thorough attention. With the time that was allotted to the original review committee, it successfully identified resources, scheduled presentations and time for discussion to ensure that members had a foundational understanding of the issues before them. The review committee worked diligently on recommendations, which are included in the attached report, but also agreed on the importance of continuing its work. LD 1622 will allow this important work to continue. For those reason, I ask you to act favorably on this resolve.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to take any questions you may have for me.