



Rachel Talbot Ross  
Senator, District 28

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

*Testimony of Senator Rachel Talbot Ross introducing*  
**LD 259, “An Act to Establish the Criminal Records Review Commission in Statute”**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
February 12, 2025*

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

I am Senator Rachel Talbot Ross, and I represent Senate District 28, which includes part of Portland and Peaks Island. Today, I present LD 259, *An Act to Establish the Criminal Records Review Commission in Statute*.

This legislation is the culmination of years of work examining how Maine’s criminal history record policies impact individuals and communities. The foundation for this bill was laid in 2021 when I introduced LD 563, *A Resolve to Create the Criminal Records Review Committee*. That legislation, passed by both chambers and signed into law, established the original Criminal Records Review Committee (CRRC), which was tasked with studying the processes for sealing and expunging criminal records. The committee’s goal was to ensure that individuals who have served their sentences are not permanently burdened by past convictions while also maintaining public safety.

Throughout its work, the CRRC recognized that the issues surrounding criminal records were complex and interconnected with various legal, social, and economic systems. It became clear that a short-term review was insufficient to fully address these challenges, so in 2022, I introduced LD 1818 to continue the committee’s work. Though that bill was not enacted, the need for ongoing review remained pressing. In 2023, the Legislature reestablished the CRRC through another one of my bills, LD 1622, allowing the committee to continue its study and refine its recommendations.

The CRRC’s work over multiple legislative sessions has reinforced the necessity of a permanent body dedicated to evaluating Maine’s criminal records policies. The committee found that outdated or overly restrictive record-keeping practices can create unnecessary barriers to employment, housing, and economic stability for individuals who have served their time. At the same time, public access to criminal history information must be balanced with transparency and public safety concerns. The committee concluded that these issues require continuous oversight rather than a series of temporary studies.

This bill, LD 259, directly implements the CRRC’s primary recommendation: creating a permanent Criminal Records Review Commission. This commission will ensure that Maine’s policies remain fair, effective, and adaptable to evolving legal and societal needs. It will provide structured, ongoing review, allowing policymakers to make informed decisions rather than reacting to these issues on a



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case-by-case basis. Furthermore, it will have the authority to propose legislation at the start of each regular session, ensuring that Maine remains proactive in addressing criminal records policy.

Establishing this commission is not just about administrative oversight but justice, opportunity, and public safety. LD 259 will help Maine create a criminal records system that is both fair and functional, reducing unnecessary barriers while maintaining accountability.

I urge the committee to support this bill and advance it to the full Legislature. Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Talbot Ross".

**Rachel Talbot Ross**  
State Senator, District 28  
*Representing part of Portland and Peaks Island*