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AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

**Nina Azella Milliken**

P.O. Box 147

Blue Hill, ME 04614

Phone: (207) 412-8828

[Nina.milliken@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Nina.milliken@legislature.maine.gov)

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*Testimony of Representative Nina Milliken presenting*  
**LD 421, An Act to Eliminate Barriers to Reentry into the  
Community After Incarceration by Repealing Certain Driver's  
License Suspension Provisions**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety*

Good morning, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and friends and colleagues on the best committee in the Maine Legislature. My name is Nina Milliken, and I am honored to represent the people of Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry and Trenton in the Maine House of Representatives. I'm here today to present **LD 421, An Act to Eliminate Barriers to Reentry into the Community After Incarceration by Repealing Certain Driver's License Suspension Provisions**.

This bill is inspired by Phil — a Mainer, a person in long-term recovery from substance use disorder, a veteran and someone who recently celebrated eight years of sobriety. Phil's story illustrates exactly why LD 421 is so necessary. Several years ago, Phil was driving when he was stopped and found in possession of fentanyl.

Though there was no evidence that he was selling drugs — and he wasn't — he was charged with drug trafficking based solely on the weight of the drugs that were intended for his personal use. Phil served time in prison and, upon release, faced a five-year suspension of his driver's license.

Reentry was an uphill battle. Without a license, Phil relied heavily on friends to get to and from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings, medical appointments and everywhere else. Every aspect of building a new, stable life was made much more difficult simply because he lacked the ability to drive.

Under current Maine law, individuals convicted of certain drug offenses can have their driver's licenses suspended for up to five years — to start after they complete their prison sentence. The suspension doesn't begin while someone is incarcerated; it starts when they are released, just as they are trying to rebuild their lives. LD 421 would repeal the ability to suspend people's licenses for these convictions.

District 16: Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry, Trenton

When people return home from incarceration, they face enormous challenges. They often start from scratch: finding housing in an already strained market, securing employment with the added challenge of the stigma of a criminal record and re-establishing community ties. Transportation is a critical piece of this puzzle — especially in a rural state like ours, where public transit options are few and far between. They are nonexistent in much of the state. Without a driver's license, even basics like attending a job interview, seeing a doctor or buying groceries become major obstacles.

Not everyone has friends and family to drive them like Phil did. Most people don't have the resources to pay for alternative transportation. Taking away a driver's license isn't a matter of public safety in these cases; it's a barrier that makes successful reentry more difficult and increases the risk of recidivism.

This bill is about recognizing that recovery and reentry are already hard enough without stacking the deck against people trying to do the right thing. It's about giving our returning neighbors a fair shot at rebuilding their lives, contributing to their communities and staying on the path of recovery. In rural Maine, living without a driver's license for five years isn't just inconvenient — it's essentially impossible.

I respectfully ask that you support LD 421.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.