

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



Peter M. Lehman, PhD

20 Lawrence Ave.
Thomaston, Maine 04861
(207) 542-1496
Peter@GrowInME.com

Testimony in support of LD 1871 to the Committee on the Judiciary

May 12, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, 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, promoting restorative practices to increase public safety and the health of our communities.

As you are well aware, **any criminal conviction is a life sentence**. With recent development of cheap and easy access to criminal records, and the development of “Business Screening Services” making money using them, any criminal record follows a person like a shadow, haunting their efforts to find work, find housing, and even find recreation.

This is particularly tragic when the “crimes” are a result of the person’s own abuse and/or exploitation.

Abuse and exploitation create deep and lasting scars that are also a life sentence. These deep and lasting scars can shape, and sometimes distort, lives and actions—sometimes in criminal behavior. So the life sentence of abuse and exploitation leads to a life sentence for the victim.

When that has happened, it is appropriate that we create a process and mechanism for it NOT to be a life sentence.

This bill allows those records to be sealed.

We urge you to support it.

Thank you for your attention.

I am happy to try to answer any questions.

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