**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
AND
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION**

In Support Of

**LD 1911 - An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for
Certain Crimes**

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Room 220, Cross Building, Augusta, Maine
Thursday, January 8, 2026

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Lani Graham, MD, MPH. I am a physician and the former chief public health officer for Maine. I am submitting this testimony in support of LD. 1911 An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes, and the proposed amendment, on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and the Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,300 allopathic and osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State. The MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined to advocate with one voice. We have all determined that testifying in support of LD 1911 is important for several reasons.

I speak today from a medical and public health perspective. LD 1911 is not only a justice reform bill but also a health intervention with measurable benefits for individuals, families, and communities across Maine.

As clinicians, we understand that health is shaped far beyond the walls of hospitals and clinics. Stable housing, reliable employment, access to education, and freedom from chronic stress are among the strongest predictors of physical and mental health. A criminal record - particularly for low-level, nonviolent offenses - directly undermines these foundations. Research consistently shows that a conviction reduces a job seeker's chances of employment by nearly 50 percent, and nearly 90 percent of landlords use background

checks.[1] These barriers translate into housing instability, food insecurity, untreated chronic disease, depression, anxiety, and substance use relapse.

LD 1911 addresses this public health harm by creating an automated, evidence-based system for sealing eligible criminal records after individuals have demonstrated years of law-abiding behavior. Importantly, this bill excludes serious and violent offenses and requires long waiting periods—five to ten years without new convictions—maintaining a strong commitment to public safety.

From a medical standpoint, the benefits of record sealing are clear. Studies show that individuals whose records are sealed experience significant increases in employment and wages—about a 23 percent rise in average quarterly earnings within a year.[2] Employment is one of the most powerful protective factors against poor health outcomes and recidivism. Stable income improves access to primary care, medications, preventive services, and mental health treatment. It reduces reliance on emergency departments and crisis services, lowering long-term healthcare costs borne by taxpayers.

Mental health is also central to this discussion. The lifelong stigma of a criminal record perpetuates toxic stress - an established risk factor for cardiovascular disease, depression, substance use disorders, and early mortality. Automatic record sealing helps relieve this chronic stress burden and restores dignity, autonomy, and hope - therapeutic effects that cannot be prescribed but are deeply consequential.

The current petition-based system has failed to deliver these benefits equitably. Despite legislative intent, only a small number of Mainers have successfully obtained record sealing. Automation corrects this inequity and promotes health equity statewide.

In medicine, we strive to prevent harm before it escalates. LD 1911 does precisely that by reducing barriers that drive poor health, instability, and repeated system involvement.

We urge you to vote in favor of LD 1911 and to support a system that allows individuals who have earned a second chance to fully reclaim their health and well-being. Thank you.

Lani Graham, MD, MPH

---

[1] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2915472/
[2] https://repository.law.umich.edu/facarticles/2470/