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## **Testimony in support of LD 1911 to the Committee on the Judiciary**

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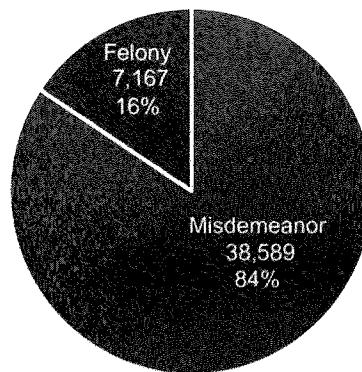
Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Committee:

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.

84% of Maine criminal case filings in 2018 were for misdemeanors.

**Case Filings by Offense Class, 2018**



CSG Justice Center ME-Presentation #2, p 28

MOST of those people never came back to court—that was their ONLY criminal record—but it goes on forever. **For Life.**

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

This Clean Slate bill MOSTLY applies to people with misdemeanor records who never got into trouble again.

We estimate that **163,000 Mainers** will have their records sealed when this is implemented. Mostly people with misdemeanor records who never got into trouble again.

That's **163,000 families**. That's a LOT. Thousands in YOUR district! Ordinary people in ordinary families with an unjust anchor around their necks.

How will you explain opposing this bill to them?

We are not talking about sealing records of serial criminals or the stereotypical bad guys from television. We are mostly talking about people convicted of misdemeanors.

The important point here is that we are **STOPPING the lifetime punishment** of people, long after they have completed their sentences.

Thank you for your generous attention.

I'd be happy to try to answer questions.