

Testimony in Support of LD 1911:
An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes

January 08, 2026

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

My name is Kathryn Reagan, and I am a resident of Topsham. I am speaking today in support of LD 1911, *An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes*. Not only am I a Maine native, but I am a mother, a person in long term recovery and someone who has a criminal record. I have spent the last 10 years creating a life that I never imagined could be possible. I have bought a home, earned a degree, and had 3 children. Despite my growth and engagement in community, my past follows me.

I battled substance use for 15 years before I entered recovery. While battling addiction I made choices that caused shame, embarrassment and harm. I made choices that ended with my photo in the newspaper and choices that motivated me to change. My record has prevented me from employment opportunities without consideration of who I have become. I fear the day my 1st and 3rd graders ask why I can't go on their fieldtrips. My community is small and many of my children's friends' parents work in the school system. I fear my daughters will lose friendships and face community stigma because of my background. They should not be punished for my past.

There is an emotional toll experienced when I have to explain the same mistake repeatedly when it no longer reflects who I am. These barriers don't just hurt me. They hurt my family, my employer, and my community. I have repaired the harm I have caused through fulfilling legal obligations and by making living amends. I should no longer be judged by an incident that happened so long ago. Each day, in both my personal and professional lives, I help others with similar experiences by using mine as a strength. Whether that be through a 12 step recovery program, assisting the unhoused with resource navigation, or supporting women with reentry back into their communities.

The current legislation to petition the court for record sealing is unattainable because I can't afford an attorney to help me navigate the system. LD1911 would create an automated system that would be accessible for people like me. It would also allow me to move forward and be more present in my children's lives. I am no longer an unsafe or irresponsible person. I have been given the name "fun police" by my family because of my level of integrity.

To be clear, my record doesn't need to be erased. That part of my journey forced me to grow and alter my life in positive ways. I'm seeking freedom from my past when applying to employment opportunities. I want to be able to volunteer for my kids' field trips without shame or stigma.

My story is not unique. There are thousands of Mainers just like me that have worked hard to heal and change. Passing LD 1911 is not about giving second chances. LD 1911 is about opening the doorway for *earned* second chances. I respectfully urge you to pass LD 1911.

I thank you for your time and am willing to answer any questions that the Committee may have.

Kathryn Reagan
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