



Testimony in Support of LD 1922:

An Act to Support Workforce Development for Families That Were Involved in Child Protective Activities by Requiring the Sealing of Certain Records

January 27, 2026

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Tess Parks, and I am the Policy Director of Maine Recovery Action Project (ME-RAP), a statewide grassroots network working on community and policy-based solutions to substance use. I am testifying in support of LD 1922 on behalf of our statewide team of organizers.

ME-RAP is a listening-first organization. Between legislative sessions, we travel statewide to hear from Mainers impacted by our addiction crisis. We also operate the Access Center, a peer-led recovery community center in Augusta, and ME-RAP Youth Caucuses led by young people affected by substance use in Penobscot, Kennebec, and Washington Counties. Across our work, we consistently hear that past involvement with Child Protective Services (CPS) can create lifelong barriers to employment and volunteer opportunities.

One clear example of this issue is found in Rider D of some DHHS State of Maine contracts related to background checks. There is a provision that prohibits the provider from hiring or retaining in any capacity any person who may directly provide services to a client who is a minor child if that person has a record of substantiated abuse or neglect of a child. It is our understanding that there is neither an appeal process nor any time limit on exclusion.

Our Executive Director, Courtney Gary-Allen, a person in long-term recovery, has a substantiated finding on her record from the period when her children were removed from her custody. Despite dedicating her life to serving Maine's recovery community and repeatedly demonstrating that she is fit to support and supervise young people, she is barred from providing direct services in our youth caucus program. Excluding people like Courtney is unnecessary and harmful, as it denies young people access to experienced mentors and meaningful support rooted in lived experience.

We need to be clear that SUD is a chronic but treatable brain disorder. Maine invests significant state, federal, and opioid settlement funds each year into SUD treatment and recovery. Maine's budget and spending shows that recovery is possible. Yet, our current CPS record system does not reflect that reality.

LD 1922 balances reducing barriers to employment and volunteer opportunities with maintaining public safety. Eligibility for sealing requires sustained periods with no indicated or substantiated reports of abuse or neglect, and excludes serious violations, such as, sexual abuse or severe physical injury.

LD 1922 is an opportunity to provide individuals and families a chance to move forward with their lives after sustained healing. We respectfully urge this Committee to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1922.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions.

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