

January 8, 2025

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

Dear Honorable Members of the Maine Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of TJP Advocacy, I write today to request your support on LD 1911 – An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes.

TJP Advocacy is a 501c (4) organization and is the action arm of The Jensen Project, a private operating foundation, supporting non-profits and individuals through strategic grants, resources, and holistic help. The Jensen Project was founded by Janet Jensen. Janet is a rape survivor and advocates committed to being a strategic partner in filling the needs of organizations in the fight against sexual violence by providing opportunities to expand their leadership skills and find a network of like-minded professionals to get support with staffing, cash flow, fundraising, operations, day-to-day questions, and more.

Maine has demonstrated national leadership in adopting evidence-based, trauma-informed and survivor-centered approaches to deterring sex trafficking and supporting survivors. In 2023, the Legislature took a landmark step forward by passing of LD 1435 An Act to Reduce Commercial Sexual Exploitation, and LD 1436 An Act to Provide Remedies for Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation led by the late Rep. Lois Reckitt. These reforms shifted accountability away from victims and toward those who exploit them, while creating meaningful pathways to stability and freedom for survivors through post-conviction relief.

This session, Maine has the opportunity to continue that leadership. We commend lawmakers for advancing LD 1911 (An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes) and appreciate the sponsor's recent amendments, which expand automatic criminal-record sealing to include non-convictions, introduce phased sealing of historical records, and prevent sealed records from being accessed by professional licensing agencies. These changes reflect a more complete understanding of how criminal histories—especially those tied to exploitation and coercion—limit a survivor's ability to secure safety, housing, and economic independence.

It is widely known that victims of sex trafficking and exploitation are forced to commit crimes during the course of their victimization. The burden of criminal records frequently hinders victims from gaining access to employment, housing, education, and more. As part of the [National Survivor Study](#) looking at the impact of criminal records on sex and

labor trafficking victims, 40% of survivor respondents reported some kind of criminal record as a result of their trafficking experience. Of those, 69% responded that criminal records kept them from getting or keeping a job, 59% responded that their record affected their ability to get good, safe housing, 63% reported their record affected their ability to receive education, training, or a professional license and another 35% responded that their criminal record affected their custody of their children. Criminal relief, beyond that for solely prostitution-related offenses, is necessary to provide adequate support to survivors of sex trafficking and exploitation.

TJP Advocacy is committed to the fight to end commercial sexual exploitation by providing ongoing support and advocacy on behalf of survivors of exploitation and trafficking.

As LD 1911 is reviewed by the Judiciary Committee, TJP Advocacy strongly urges you to consider and support this legislation. LD 1911 will have a significant impact on the lives of survivors and allow survivors to rebuild their lives and livelihood.

For any questions on this bill and the impact it will have on survivors of human trafficking, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Johnston Ellis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" being more prominent and the last name "Ellis" following in a similar style.

Sarah Johnston Ellis
Director
TJP Advocacy