

Samantha Genest
Portland
LD 1911

January 08, 2026

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

My name is Samantha Genest, and I am a resident of Portland, Maine. I am writing in
strong support of

LD 1911, An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for
Certain Crimes. Like one in four adults in our state, I live with a past criminal record.
I have worked hard to rebuild my

life. I have held steady employment, supported myself, contributed to my family, paid
my taxes, went

back to college, and I've stayed out of trouble. Yet, despite everything I've done to
rebuild my life, my

past continues to follow me.

While I am fortunate enough to have my record in other states and am eligible for
expungement

eventually, I have still faced the frustration of being turned down by job after job once
background checks

were completed, regardless of my competence or dedication to the role. These barriers
don't just hurt me,

they hurt employers and society as a whole. I was a temporary employee at a
company for a year before

they offered me employment. I told them about my record, and they deliberated for
two months. To my

good fortune, they opted to hire me based on my work ethic but it could have easily
gone the other way.

In 2022, the Legislature created a process to allow people to petition the courts to seal
certain

misdemeanor records. While the intent was good, the reality is that the system does
not work for most

Mainers. The petition process is confusing, time-consuming, and intimidating. Many
people don't even

know they are eligible. Others can't afford an attorney or take time off work to go to
court. The result is

that relief exists on paper, but almost no one can access it.

LD 1911 would break down barriers and expand relief for those that have earned
second chances. It

does not erase records or compromise public safety. Law enforcement and courts
would still have access.

Only people who have remained conviction-free for many years would qualify, and
serious offenses are
excluded.

Please understand how important obtaining gainful, meaningful employment serves to
help those in

recovery work toward building a new life that they will work hard to keep.

Maine believes in accountability, hard work, and second chances. LD 1911 reflects
those values. I urge

you to vote "ought to pass".

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Genest
Portland, ME