

## **Response in support of the LD 1911**

On behalf of Agape, Inc., we write in strong support of LD 1911, An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Certain Crimes. At Agape, Inc., our mission is rooted in simple but powerful beliefs and actions. We foster inclusive communities grounded in compassion, dignity, and radical acceptance, and we are committed to being present with individuals during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. Through this work, we see firsthand how policies shape whether people are met with open doors or permanently closed ones, long after they have taken responsibility for their past.

Every day, we walk alongside Mainers who are doing exactly what our systems encourage. They work hard, take their recovery seriously, and strive for wellness and stability. Yet a criminal record continues to follow them, closing doors to employment and housing even when they have consistently demonstrated growth and change. These barriers undermine their dignity and perpetuate cycles of suffering that affect not only them but also their loved ones, families, and communities.

We applaud Maine for creating a pathway to seal certain misdemeanor records in 2022, but the current petition-based system has proven inaccessible to most who qualify. Navigating complex forms, appearing in court, and risking denial over paperwork errors creates barriers that effectively deny eligible individuals the fresh start the law intends. For people juggling jobs, childcare, and transportation challenges, the process is often unrealistic despite meeting all requirements. Compassion must be matched with systems that actually work.

LD 1911 reflects the values we strive to live out at Agape, Inc. By creating an automatic, streamlined record-sealing process, Clean Slate Maine affirms the inherent worth of people who have fulfilled their obligations and earned relief. It emphasizes the importance of empowering people through opportunity and trust, helping them move past the limitations of their past. This bill will strengthen Maine's workforce, improve housing stability, and promote healthier communities while honoring and respecting individuals and families who are ready to move forward.

We respectfully urge you to vote yes on LD 1911 and help enact a record-sealing system that truly reflects Maine's commitment to fairness, second chances, and human dignity. Thank you for your time, leadership, and dedication to the well-being of Maine communities.

Our best,

Stephen Andrew, Agape Board President

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