Ellen Alcorn Portland

I submit this testimony with the full understanding that I need to be more attentive to my vehicle registration. This was made all too clear to me last February when I was pulled over by an officer for a lapsed vehicle registration. Because it was several months lapsed, I was given a citation and a court date, which was when I learned that failure to register a vehicle can lead to a felony conviction. I know this sounds ridiculous, but I had no idea my registration had lapsed when I was pulled over. As people in my life can attest, I do not tend to be very detail-oriented. Add to that a very busy life (work, a long commute, children, and a cancer diagnosis) and this just slipped through the cracks. What also seems ridiculous is that a person can end up with a felony conviction for this oversight, and that the state is willing harm someone's life over this without even sending a notice in the mail. You receive a notice when your ez-pass is getting low, why not a notice when your car registration is due? I attended the arraignment hearing for one of my students, and saw firsthand the number of people this law ensnares. Many were quite young, and it seemed terrible to me that they should end up with a felony conviction on their records for the rest of their lives. One of the things I love so much about Maine is our ethos of common sense, but this is one place where common sense has not prevailed to date. Please reduce this to a misdemeanor or at the very least, if this draconian measure must remain in place, require that the DMV send out notices. Thank you for your attention.