

3/8/21

The Honorable Senator Winfield, the Honorable Representative Stafstrom and distinguished members of The Joint Committee on Judiciary:

I am contacting you today, because the consequences of having a criminal record, especially a felony conviction, impact the entire nation because of the way it drains the economy. Had there been in place Clean Slate legislation nationwide between 1980 and 2004, the poverty rate in the country would have dropped 20%. In CT, approximately 50% of those who are served by shelters for people who are homeless have been previously incarcerated.

According to the FBI, 30% of American adults have some sort of criminal record. These records haunt people for the rest of their lives, locking people out of opportunities to meet their basic human needs. Nationally, 90% of employers, 80% of landlords, and 60% of colleges use background checks in the recruiting process.

Clean slate legislation has been shown to remedy these situations.

- In Michigan, those who have had their records expunged saw a 35% pay increase after just two years and those who had their records expunged were promoted more rapidly and were no more likely to be discharged than those who never had a record in the first place.
- In Santa Clara County, CA, it has been estimated that the net benefit that has accrued for those who had their records expunged was \$5,760.00/year.

Much has been made regarding the high degree of recidivism that is experienced when people serve their sentences in CT. At least a noticeable reason for this is the difficulty that ex-convicts have in being able to support themselves independently because their records hang like an albatross around their necks. Clean Slate legislation would remove that albatross for many of those who have paid the price for their crimes and now want to become responsible citizens.

For all of these reasons, I support the Clean Slate bill raised in the Judiciary Committee (**S.B. 1019**). Passing a real robust and inclusive Clean Slate Bill would allow people who have already been punished to support themselves, provide for their families and contribute to their communities. Clean slate would automatically expunge the criminal records of people who have returned to outside society and remained crime free for a period of time Specifically, **Raised Senate Bill No. 1019** would:

- Include all misdemeanors and Class C,D and E felonies (convictions for 10 years or less) excluding convictions for sex crimes and family violence.

- Apply retroactively.
- Include anti-discrimination protections for people with records.

I urge, therefore, the members of The Joint Committee on the Judiciary to recommend enactment of **SB 1019** to the full Senate and House of Representatives.

Thank you.

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