



## **What is the Clean Slate Initiative?**

### **ANY CRIMINAL RECORD IS A LIFE SENTENCE TO POVERTY**

- In 2019, 1.9 million Missourians had criminal records. Any criminal record-even an arrest that never led to conviction -can be a lifelong barrier to opportunity.
- Having a criminal record restricts access to jobs, occupational licensing, credit, housing, education and other basics.
- In 2021, 13,214 individuals were released from prison in Missouri.
- In Missouri nearly all eligible individuals have to proactively file a petition to expunge their record which can be both expensive and time-intensive.
- In 2019, only 125 Missourians, or 1% of those eligible, were able to expunge their records under the current system.

### **What is the Clean Slate Initiative?**

- Clean Slate will help to provide a new start to those who have effectively demonstrated that their past mistakes do not define them.
- Clean Slate streamlines the process with the help of technology, making record-clearing automatic once someone has remained crime-free for eligible non-violent convictions for a set period of time - regardless of whether they can afford a lawyer and court fees.

### **Who Will Benefit from Clean Slate?**

- Justice-involved individuals and their families will benefit, as they are able to earn a decent living, obtain stable housing and access education and training.
- The criminal justice system will not be burdened with the transaction costs of record-clearing petitions, reducing a burdensome workload for Missouri's overtaxed courts and prosecutors' offices that will save taxpayer dollars.
- Communities will benefit because the stigma of a criminal record for citizens, which limits employment opportunities and access to housing, is a major driver of poverty and racial inequality.
- National and local economies will benefit. In the aggregate, people with criminal convictions face lost wages nationally in excess of \$272 billion every year, and estimates put the cost of employment losses at \$87 billion annually in lost gross domestic products.

## **Where is It Working Now?**

- Nationally, 70 percent of Americans across party lines support the Clean Slate policies, and Clean Slate Initiatives have had overwhelming support on both sides of the aisles in states that have passed them.
- Pennsylvania and Utah have implemented Clean Slate Acts; Michigan and California have passed legislation, but not fully implemented; Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey, North Dakota, Washington and Virginia are taking steps towards Clean Slate Initiatives.
- When Utah implemented their automated Clean Slate Act on February 10, 2022, nearly 400,000 historical criminal records were cleared. Pennsylvania has sealed 40 million records since the implementation of their automated Clean Slate Act in 2019.

## **Clean Slate is a Win-Win for All of Us**

- Justice-involved individuals and their families will benefit, as they are able to earn a decent living, obtain stable housing and access the education and training they need to get ahead.
- Missouri's criminal justice system will not be burdened with the transactional costs of record-clearing petitions, reducing a burdensome workload for its overtaxed courts.
- The economy will benefit as qualified job seekers are able to re-enter the labor force.
- Some localities in other states have seen significant drops in recidivism in cases where people were cleared to gain employment after incarceration or expungement. Missouri will save taxpayer dollars as a result of bringing more people into the workforce and interrupting the cycle of recidivism and reincarceration.
- Communities will be safer due to lower recidivism rates as more justice-involved people are able to move on with their lives and provide for their families.

### ***For More Information:***

Expungement gets renewed attention as state looks to legalize recreational marijuana, Fulton Sun, January 25, 2022

<https://www.fultonsun.com/news/2022/jan/25/expungement-gets-renewed-attention-as-state-looks/>

Missouri Clean Slate Campaign <https://www.mocleanslate.org/>

The Clean Slate Initiative <https://www.cleanslateinitiative.org/>

Center for American Progress Report: "A Criminal Record Shouldn't Be a Life Sentence to Poverty." May 28, 2021

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/criminal-record-shouldnt-life-sentence-poverty-2/>

The Case for Expunging Criminal Records, The New York Times, March 20, 2019

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/20/opinion/expunge-criminal-records.html>

Expungement of Criminal Convictions: An Empirical Study, Prescott, J. J., and Starr, Sonja B., *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 133, No. 8, pp. 2460-555 (June 2020).

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3353620](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3353620)

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