



CONNECT

Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut
Congregaciones Organizadas para un Nuevo Connecticut

CLEAN SLATE FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Why automatic expungement 3 years after a misdemeanor and 5 years after a felony?:

Currently in Connecticut, people with a criminal record can apply to the Board of Pardons and Paroles to have their record expunged 3 years after completing their sentence for a misdemeanor and 5 years after completing their sentence for a felony. Returning citizens can demonstrate their effort to rebuild their lives free of crime during these reasonable timeframes. Recidivism rates also drop dramatically after 3 years. Automatic expungement would reward returning citizens that remain crime-free by removing the stigma of a record.

Why not use the current process through the Board of Pardons & Paroles?: The current process is difficult, intimidating, and slow. Most returning citizens find they cannot fill out the paperwork without the help of a lawyer, which very few can afford. Most of those eligible to get their records expunged never apply at all. Those that do apply often find their requests rejected seemingly for arbitrary reasons or without explanation. Therefore, automatically expunging criminal records would reduce the financial burden and time spent in applying for expungement through CT's current bureaucratic process.

What about folks with violent felonies?: The Clean Slate proposal would apply to those with misdemeanors and non-violent felony records. Those with violent felony records would still be eligible to apply for expungement through the current process, which would allow closer scrutiny of what is appropriate to their particular case. With most cases off their docket due to Clean Slate, the Board of Pardons and Paroles could focus on a more fair and efficient process for these more difficult cases.

Who has passed and who supports Clean Slate legislation?: Clean Slate legislation passed the Pennsylvania House and Senate with broad bipartisan support (188-2 and unanimously) in 2018. Michigan, Colorado, and South Carolina are all now considering Clean Slate legislation. Nationally, both conservative and liberal groups, like Koch Brothers and Center for American Progress, actively support other states adopting Clean Slate legislation.

Why is this important?: Clean Slate removes the stigma of a criminal record and restores the dignity and full citizenship of those with a criminal record. It is an important step in shifting our highly punitive, racist system of mass incarceration towards rehabilitation, restoration, and redemption. Additionally, Clean Slate would be good for our economy with returning citizens getting new jobs, earning better wages, and opening small businesses. Returning citizen with expunged records would be a new and underemployed workforce to fill some of the 25,000 jobs currently unfilled here in CT, most of which require background checks.