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Jesse Kelley
Senior Policy Strategist
The Clean Slate Initiative

RE: Support of HB 2108 and HB 2555

My name is Jesse Kelley, Senior Policy Strategist at The Clean Slate Initiative (CSI). CSI is a national nonprofit organization that works alongside state legislatures and administrative agencies to streamline the record clearance process.

As of 2019, about 1.7 million people in Missouri, about one in three adults, had some form of a record. Non-conviction and conviction records can present significant barriers to employment, housing, education, and overall social reintegration.

Clean Slate legislation has proven to be effective in addressing these challenges by allowing eligible individuals to have their records automatically sealed, giving them a fresh start. If the proposed legislation passes, up to 1.1 million Missourians - or 65% of adults with records - could have their records fully cleared and have more meaningful access to opportunities.

Since 2018, twelve states have enacted Clean Slate laws, creating a substantial, positive impact on individuals and communities. The implementation of similar legislation in Missouri has the potential to bolster public safety and stimulate economic growth.

Individuals with sealed records are more likely to secure employment, leading to increased productivity and economic contribution. Automatic record clearance can unlock the untapped potential of a broad and underutilized workforce. Workforce expansion goes hand-in-hand with expanding a community's purchasing power, stimulating economic growth, and stabilizing local economies.



The long-term return on investment in terms of increased tax revenue, reduced reliance on social services, and enhanced public safety far outweigh any upfront costs associated with implementing automatic sealing.

Clean Slate policies are about fairness, recognizing that a person's entire life should not be overshadowed by their worst mistake. People who have served their sentence and maintained a clean record deserve a second chance. Denying jobs, housing, and the ability to provide for their families perpetuates a cycle of punishment that serves no one. Clean Slate legislation aims to support productive members of society, foster strong work ethics, and enable people to contribute to their communities.

Second chances are at the heart of Clean Slate policies. Studies reveal that individuals with a previous conviction who remain crime-free for four to seven years are no more likely to commit another crime than the general population. Together, HB 2108 and HB 2555 offer a path to redemption and enhance public safety. By removing barriers to opportunities, Clean Slate laws help communities by empowering individuals to support themselves and their families.

This legislation promotes social and economic stability, fostering a sense of hope and dignity for those seeking to engage with society as productive, law-abiding citizens.

I strongly urge the Committee to recognize the benefits automatic record clearance offers to Missourians by giving favorable reports to HB 2108 and HB 2555. By doing so, you will empower people to rebuild their lives, contribute meaningfully to our communities, and create a safer, more prosperous Missouri. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am available to answer any questions or provide additional information as needed.

Sincerely,

Jesse Kelley

jkelly@cleanslateinitiative.org