

Writing your legislator about Clean Slate Legislation

Helpful hints:

- **Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph** of the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly. For example: House bill: (HB ____) or by topic: Clean Slate.
- Be **courteous, focused** on the points you want to make, use the **key information** we have provided, and if you can, include **examples from your own experience** to support your position.
- Please **stay on message**. Please do not address other topics or personal matters in this letter or e-mail.
- Keep the letter or e-mail to **one page** and **type** the letter, if possible. If handwritten, be sure your handwriting is neat and can be **easily read**.

Sample letter to state legislator:

Dear Representative/Senator *[add name]*,

As a constituent, I am writing to urge you to support House Bills 4980-4985, which involve expungement reform and the automation of the expungement process.

I am a member of *[add affiliation, if any]* in your district, and I believe we can build better communities, and a better economy, by removing barriers to employment for people who have served their sentence and remained crime-free for a number of years.

Thousands of people in Michigan struggle with unemployment or underemployment because of old criminal records, even though a person that has stayed out of trouble for years and is very unlikely to re-offend. If passed, the bills above will help address this problem.

Increasing access to expungement will help Michigan's economy, build its workforce and increase public safety:

- Within two years of receiving an expungement, a person's likelihood of being employed increases significantly and their personal income increases 25 percent.
- Michigan has low unemployment and a talent gap of more than 811,000 openings in the skill trades by 2024 that is preventing businesses from growing and meeting future workforce needs. People with criminal records are untapped resources and could be critical to meeting Michigan's talent and workforce needs.
- Employment has been shown to reduce reoffense rates, so increasing employment rates among people with criminal records will increase public safety.

A Clean Slate package will not impact law enforcement's access to criminal history information. This legislation is only about allowing employers access to a wider talent pool and helping people who deserve a second chance.

We hope you will join us in working to support the removal of unnecessary barriers to employment, it's time to clean the slate in Michigan.

Sincerely,

[Include your daytime telephone number and e-mail address under your signature]

Questions? Contact John Cooper, Executive Director of Safe & Just Michigan, at 517.258.1134 or john@safeandjustmi.org

Safe & Just
Michigan

www.safeandjustmi.org

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