

Safe & Just
Michigan

State Legislators Celebrate Start of First-Offense DUI Expungement in Michigan

New expungement opportunity builds on success of Clean Slate laws

LANSING — Michiganders who have one conviction for driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol can now start to apply for expungement of that offense from their criminal record under a new state law that has taken effect. State Rep. **Tenisha Yancey** (D-Detroit) and state Sen. **Ed McBroom** (R-Waucedah) joined Safe & Just Michigan Executive Director **John S. Cooper** and Clean Slate Program Manager **Kamau Sandiford** to explain why the law was passed and how Michiganders can apply for relief under the new rules during an online kickoff event Tuesday afternoon.

“The passage of Clean Slate last year was a great step forward for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders who have old convictions on their record keeping them from finding good jobs or safe and affordable places to live,” said Cooper, whose Lansing-based organization works on criminal justice reform policy. “However, DUI convictions were not included in the original bill package, and as Clean Slate was moving through the Legislature, we heard repeatedly that people with a single DUI on their record really needed help to get a fresh start, too. This DUI expungement law will do that for thousands of people, and we’re ready to help them make the most of the new expungement laws.”

It's not clear exactly how many people may qualify for expungement under the new law, but in 2019 alone, there were over 30,000 convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Some lawmakers voiced disappointment that DUI expungement wasn't included in the original Clean Slate laws. Rep. Yancey and Sen. McBroom were among the legislators who championed the new law.

The new law won't make expungements possible for everyone who has a DUI. If a person has more than one DUI on record, they won't be able to seek an expungement. Other restrictions include:

- Offenses that resulted in the death or serious injury of any person;

- Offenses that occurred when driving a commercial vehicle while using a commercial driver's license (CDL); and
- Offenses that occurred while a child under the age of 16 was in the vehicle (“child endangerment”).

The new expungement laws have opened opportunities for fresh starts to hundreds of thousands of people around the state, but the expungement process can still be hard to navigate. For that reason, Safe & Just Michigan is partnering with other criminal justice reform advocates like [Nation Outside](#), legal aid organizations statewide, workforce development agencies such as [MichiganWorks!](#) and city and county government agencies around the state to connect people with free or low-cost legal help. Safe & Just Michigan Clean Slate Program Manager Sandiford — an attorney who began helping people expunge their records even before the Clean Slate laws existed — is heading that effort.

“The last thing we want is for these great new laws to go unused because the legal process is still too confusing, expensive or difficult to access,” Sandiford said. “We are doing all we can to reach every corner of the state through expungement fairs where people can sit down with attorneys and discuss their situation. Each time someone gets an expungement, that’s another person in Michigan who will have an easier time entering the workforce and finding a good job, or finding an affordable, secure home for their family.”

To learn more about expungement fairs happening around the state, people are encouraged to sign up for Safe & Just Michigan’s monthly e-newsletter at bit.ly/sjmsignup.

A video of the DUI Expungement Kickoff will be available later this week on Safe & Just Michigan’s YouTube channel at bit.ly/YouTubeSJM.

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Safe & Just Michigan (www.safeandjustmi.org) works to advance policies that end Michigan’s over-use of incarceration and promote community safety and healing. We partner with Michigan organizations and leaders from across the political spectrum, including business and community leaders, faith communities, crime survivor organizations, formerly incarcerated individuals, prisoners and their families, as well as Michigan taxpayers statewide.