

Safe & Just
Michigan

State and National Experts Celebrate Michigan's First Year of Clean Slate

Automatic expungement will soon bring relief to people with old criminal records

LANSING — After one year of being in effect, Michigan's Clean Slate laws have opened opportunities to better jobs, safer and more affordable housing and advanced education to thousands of Michiganders, which will improve our state's economy, bolster families and improve public safety, according to state and national experts speaking about the legislation's milestone during a webinar Monday. "Clean Slate: A year in review – Looking forward to automatic relief," hosted by Lansing-based Safe & Just Michigan, featured Michigan State Court Administrator The Hon. **Thomas P. Boyd**, Clean Slate Initiative Executive Director **Sheena Meade** and Clean Slate Utah Founder and CEO of Rasa Public Benefit Corp. **Noella Sudbury**. The event was sponsored by Lansing-based Safe & Just Michigan, one of the organizations that advocated for the passage of Clean Slate.

"One year in, we are seeing historic numbers of people seeking expungements, which is great news," said Safe & Just Michigan Executive Director **John S. Cooper**. "But we are also continuing to see the limitations of the petition system, which underscores the importance of the automatic expungement that will become effective next year. It will serve many times the number of people that the petition system does at no cost to the people whose records are sealed."

It's unclear how many people have already benefited from Clean Slate, as expungements are handled at the county level and can take months to complete. However, numerous expungement fairs have occurred around the state to help people make the most of the new laws, including many co-sponsored by Safe & Just Michigan. A list of upcoming expungement events can be found at www.safeandjustmi.org/take-action/events.

One thing is clear: the number of people benefitting from Clean Slate will soon increase considerably. The state is setting up the technical aspects needed to allow courts, the state police and other agencies to communicate with each other in order to automate the expungement of several

offenses. Once that goes online, people with old criminal records will see those offenses expunged without having to fill out legal paperwork, hire an attorney or go before a judge.

“The automatic expungement of old records will mean a phenomenal improvement for the lives of thousands of people in Michigan,” said Safe & Just Michigan Senior Policy Analyst **Josh Hoe**. “Imagine your worst mistake has followed you like a shadow for years, preventing you from getting decent jobs or signing a lease — even though you’ve done nothing else wrong for decades — and then one day, that record is simply gone. That is what many people in Michigan are looking forward to. Even people who don’t know they are eligible for this kind of expungement will benefit.”

A recording of Monday’s presentation will soon be available 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.