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Safe & Just Michigan

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Michigan Implements Historic “Clean Slate” Law, Giving Fresh Start to 1 Million Michiganders

Bipartisan law ends lifelong barriers to employment and housing for qualified people

LANSING – Advocates gathered in Michigan’s Capitol to celebrate a historic 2020 law that took effect today, automatically sealing records for certain people convicted of low-level, non-violent offenses after a defined waiting period.

“We’re celebrating a historic step forward as Michigan becomes just the third state to implement automatic expungement,” said **John Cooper, Executive Director of Safe & Just Michigan**. “This reform will deliver immediate and automatic impact for more than a million people, all of whom are likely to see their access to housing and jobs improve overnight.”

The existing court process to seal old criminal records is inaccessible for most of Michigan’s 2.8 million people who have criminal records. In 2020, Michigan passed this historic, nation-leading new law that can begin to address the barriers preventing people from fair and adequate access to housing and employment.

“This groundbreaking, nation-leading reform will be transformational for thousands of our neighbors in West Michigan, and for our member businesses who have thousands of job openings to fill,” said **Josh Lunger, Vice President of Government Affairs with the Grand Rapids Chamber**. “Building sustainable talent pipelines and creating economic opportunity for more people is a critical piece of supporting a thriving and prosperous West Michigan for all.”

The University of Michigan researchers found that within a year of receiving an expungement, on average a person is 11% more likely to be employed and sees a 23% increase in income. The same research found that reoffense rates for expungement recipients were low, comparing favorably to the general public.

“The work of Clean Slate Michigan partners has inspired other states around the country to ensure working people have a meaningful chance at building a better life for themselves and their families,” said **Sheena Meade, CEO of [The Clean Slate Initiative](#)**. “Michigan’s Clean Slate

law passed with overwhelming bipartisan support because Clean Slate policies are good for the economy and improve community safety. The Clean Slate Initiative and our Michigan partners will continue to work with state agencies to ensure this process works as lawmakers intended and everyone who is eligible has their shot at redemption.”

“Clean Slate legislation is the sort of justice reform that helps improve both public safety and economic prosperity, said **Jeff Korzenik, economist and author of *Untapped Talent***.

“Employers are aggressively seeking talent, and Clean Slate legislation ensures that applicants with mistakes in the distant past won’t be overlooked.”

After a waiting period of 7 years for up to 4 misdemeanors, and 10 years for up to 2 felonies, convictions will be automatically made eligible to be sealed. This criteria has been coded into an algorithm that will run daily in the Michigan State Police criminal history database, automatically and completely sealing these records and giving a “Clean Slate” to about 400,000 people. Each year going forward, between 100,000 and 200,000 additional low-level, non-violent conviction records will be sealed annually as additional Michiganders meet the requirements and become eligible.

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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.