



Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Dear Members of the House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Committee,

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity activists across Minnesota, I am writing today in support of HF1152, the “Clean Slate Act”, which would provide for the sealing of criminal records for misdemeanors and charges not leading to convictions.

All criminals should be held accountable for their actions, but punishments should be proportional to the crime committed. Then, after being held accountable, an individual should be allowed to put his or her life back together. In our state, dated and irrelevant criminal records prevent people from obtaining jobs and productively re-entering a community once they have served their sentence.

Nationwide, the scale of arrest and incarceration is massive. As of 2015, more than 70 million people in the United States have a criminal record of some kind, roughly equal to the number of Americans with bachelor’s degrees. Even when they reflect low-level crimes or charges that did not result in conviction, these records impose serious barriers to opportunity in the workplace and everyday life. Allowing Minnesotans who have paid their debt to society, or who never posed a threat to public safety to begin with, to move on from their pasts and rejoin the workforce and their communities would be a step in the right direction towards eliminating the collateral consequences of the criminal justice system.

Across the country, criminal justice reform has proven to be a winning issue that attracts widespread support from the voting public and unites lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. Both Utah and Pennsylvania have passed similar forms of this bill – and they did so under conservative leadership and with broad bipartisan support. Following on the heels of the First Step Act, monumental federal justice reform enacted with bipartisan support in 2018, passage of the Clean Slate Act will put Minnesota on the right track towards lasting criminal justice reforms that promote human dignity, reduce costs, and enhance public safety.

We cannot allow individuals who seek out and work for a second chance to be defined and held back by their worst mistakes in life. With an inerasable criminal record, they are, in effect, locked out of the American Dream. That is why these reforms are so important.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have questions, need more information, or if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

Jason Flohrs
State Director
Americans for Prosperity – Minnesota