



June 14, 2021

Dear Representatives & Senators,

Thank you for voting for the Clean Slate bill (SB 1019). As you know, Gov. Lamont signed the bill into law last Thursday afternoon. Once implemented, as many as 300,000 people across the state are estimated to benefit from this critical policy – a policy that will ensure a criminal record is *not* a lifetime sentence.

We urge you to stand firmly behind Clean Slate, which both the Senate and House passed with large majorities (23-12 & 91-56), and not to agree to further limitations or carve outs as Gov. Lamont suggested in his recent letter. Any further compromises only serve to leave more people out of the opportunities in employment, housing, education, professional licensing, and more that come from criminal record expungement. Any further compromises will undoubtedly leave more Black, Latino, and poor residents behind as well, further eroding the racial equity impact of the legislation.

Clean Slate is good policy that will make our communities safer, will create new economic opportunity and growth, and will help redress the long and enduring legacy of racial injustice in our criminal justice system. We urge you to defend it and see it through to successful implementation benefiting the largest number of people possible.

Sincerely,

Rev. Anthony L. Bennett
Pastor, Mt. Aery Baptist Church
Co-Chair, Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut (CONNECT)

David McGuire
Executive Director
ACLU-CT

Dwayne David Paul
Chair, Criminal Justice Team
Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA)

Christina Quaranta
Executive Director
Connecticut Justice Alliance

Kenyatta Muzzanni
Director of Organizing
Katal Center for Health, Equity, & Justice



Reps. & Senators cont.
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Rob Hebert
Senior Vice President for Reentry Affairs,
Career Resources
Co-chair, Bridgeport Reentry Collaborative.

Beth Hines
Executive Director
Community Partners in Action
Co-Chair, Waterbury Reentry Roundtable

Rochelle Palache
Vice President
SEIU 32BJ

Rob Baril
President
SEIU 1199 NE

Kathy Flaherty
Executive Director
Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc.

Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW
Executive Director
National Association Social Workers, CT Chapter

Deborah R. Witkin
Executive Director
Connecticut Legal Services

Jason Wasserman
President
Restorative Action Alliance

Susan Gunderman
Re-Entry Services Specialist, City of Hartford
Co-Chair, Greater Hartford Reentry Council

Jeremy Stein
Executive Director
Connecticut Against Gun Violence (CAGV)



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Marisa Mascolo Halm
Director, TeamChild Youth Justice Project
Center for Children's Advocacy

Tom Langan
Chief Justice Officer, Domus Kids Inc
Chair of the Stamford Reentry Roundtable



Four Key Arguments for Clean Slate:

Public Safety -- when people returning from prison have greater access to jobs, housing, and higher education, they are less likely to recidivate. Recent groundbreaking [research](#) by law professors J.J. Prescott of the University of Michigan Law School and Sonja Starr of the University of Chicago Law School reveals that Clean Slate reduces the likelihood of recidivism for individuals with records -- 96% of people receiving expungements in Michigan did not recidivate after 5 years. This rises to 99% for felony recidivism. As Prescott and Starr explain, recidivism rates for people who have had their records expunged are so low that they actually ***“pose a lower crime risk than the general population as a whole.”***

Racial Justice -- while CT has reduced its prison population from its 2008 peak, we still disproportionately imprison Black and Latinx people. Black people are 9.4x more likely than white people to be incarcerated, and Latinx people are 3.9x more likely than white people to be incarcerated. These disproportionate racial impacts, legacies of the “War on Drugs” and Mass Incarceration, will last for decades to come without a Clean Slate policy. Our current Board of Pardons and Paroles system is inadequate to meet the task: recent [research](#) by Prof Colleen Chien et al of the Santa Clara University School of Law, shows that only **3%** of those eligible for an expungement in CT are getting relief. At the current rate, it would take **577 years** for all those eligible for an expungement in CT to get one. In contrast, Clean Slate would help an estimated 277,000 people.

Economic Growth -- with hundreds of thousands of people in CT suffering the collateral consequences of a criminal record, our entire state economy is held back and a large workforce is un- or under-utilized. Starr & Prescott’s [research](#) showed increased annual earnings of nearly \$4,500 in the year following record expungement. With an estimated 277,000 people eligible to benefit here in Connecticut from Clean Slate, similar gains would mean more than \$1.2 billion in additional earnings. That’s an economic impact we cannot afford to refuse.

Broad Public Support in CT and around the US -- [early 2020 polling](#) by the ACLU showed **85 percent of Connecticut voters**, including 91 percent of Democrats, 88 percent of Independents, and 72 percent of Republicans, say that people who have been convicted of a crime should have a fair shot at getting their lives on track without having their prison sentence held against them. Also, Clean Slate policies have been adopted in a wide range of states (PA, CA, NJ, SD, UT, VA, MI) and are being proposed in many more (NY, LA, OR, NC, TX). Clean Slate should be the next step in fulfilling CT’s promise to be a “second chance” state.