



Letter in Support of Clean Slate Act Provisions
Omnibus Public Safety Conference Committee, S.F. 2673
May 11, 2022

Dear Chair Limmer, Chair Mariani, and Members of the Judiciary and Public Safety Policy Conference Committee,

The Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public policy voice for the Catholic Church in Minnesota, writes to highlight the automatic expungement language (Clean Slate Act, H.F. 1152- Long) in the House version of the Omnibus public safety policy and supplemental appropriations bill and ask that it be included in the final Conference Committee Report.

Minnesota needs public policies that limit the effects of the collateral consequences of an arrest or conviction for nonviolent, low-level offenses. A collateral consequence of getting arrested is that the criminal record continues to shadow the person—creating a barrier to social and economic opportunities. Unfortunately, some employers disqualify applicants based on a job application’s criminal history inquiry without asking any further questions about reform, capability, or fitness.

Current law allows certain individuals to clear their records via expungement, but they must file a petition and proposed order in the District Court. This system has proven to be arduous and only a small fraction of people eligible for expungement obtain the second chance they deserve. The Clean Slate Act, as included in the House position, would automate expungements for some of the offenses that already qualify for expungement under the current petition process.

We should seek responses to crime that do not simply punish—but also rehabilitate, heal, and restore. Automatic expungements would restore access to gainful employment, stable housing, and educational opportunities. Research has revealed that individuals are 11 percent more likely to be employed and are earning 22 percent higher wages one year after obtaining an expungement.¹ In order to achieve the ends of rehabilitation and restoration we need to have easier expungements.

We ask that, as you deliberate, please keep the automatic expungement language in mind and include it in your conference committee report.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan E. Hamilton
Government Relations Associate

¹ Prescott, J.J. and Starr, Sonja B., Expungement of Criminal Convictions: An Empirical Study (March 16, 2019). Harvard Law Review, Vol. 133, No. 8, pp.2460-555 (June 2020), Available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3353620>