



March 3, 2022

Via E-Mail Delivery

Representative Carlos Mariani, Chair  
479 State Office Building  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Representative Brian Johnson, Republican Lead  
243 State Office Building  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Mariani and Lead Johnson:

On behalf of the Justice Action Network, the nation's largest bipartisan criminal justice reform organization, I am writing in support of legislation that establishes an automatic process for individuals who seek an expungement for certain qualifying offenses. The legislation – HF1152/SF1856 – is authored by Representative Jamie Long and Senator Roger Chamberlain.

The DE-Amendment to HF1152 steps back and applies lessons we've learned from the early adopter states of Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Utah. The new language reduces the number of qualifying offenses for automatic expungement while also ensuring that the process is automated and that it applies retroactively, ensuring immediate relief for law-abiding Minnesotans. Stakeholders have worked closely with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) to refocus the scope of expungements while at the same time ensuring there is an automatic process, removing the need for a petition.

The legislation provides important guardrails to protect the public. An expunged record of conviction may be viewed by law enforcement and opened as part of a criminal background check required for an occupation, job, or license. The Minnesota Department of Human Services would continue to have access to records for the purpose of background studies. Lastly, the revised language further restricts the number of offenses available for automatic expungement and specifically excludes all felony and criminal sexual conduction convictions, among other restricted offenses.

Research shows cumbersome petition-based systems that do not automatically trigger expungement fail to provide needed relief; a 2019 study of Michigan found just 6.5 percent of eligible people obtained expungement within five years of eligibility. To address these shortcomings, since 2018, at least five states have enacted an automatic expungement system – Pennsylvania, Utah, Michigan, Connecticut and Delaware – with more states currently considering similar bills.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact our organization's government relations representatives, Melissa Reed at [melissa@parkstreetpublic.com](mailto:melissa@parkstreetpublic.com) or Chas Anderson at [chas@parkstreetpublic.com](mailto:chas@parkstreetpublic.com) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenna Bettler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jenna Bettler  
Deputy Director, the Justice Action Network

C: Members, House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy Committee