

Clean Slate

CLEARINGHOUSE

A project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor
and the U.S. Department of Justice



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

The Clean Slate Model

Sealing Criminal Records through Automated Computer Queries

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Speakers

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Clearinghouse

- Online clearinghouse of each state's adult and juvenile record clearance policies, resources, guides, and legal service providers

Audience

- Legal service providers, reentry and workforce service providers, people with criminal records, policymakers

Goals

- Provide accessible, up-to-date information on record clearance policies across the country
- Increase capacity of legal service providers and create a community of practice for record clearance

cleanslateclearinghouse.org

The Council of State Governments Justice Center

What is Clean Slate?

- Clean Slate is a policy option for the mass sealing of minor convictions and non-convictions. It is enabled by automatic computer queries, instead of the filing of individual petitions.
- Sealing means the information is available to law enforcement, but not the public.



Origins of the Concept

- Featured recommendation in One Strike and You're Out (Center for American Progress, Dec. 2014)
- There is almost unlimited demand for sealing by people with records. We looked for a way of addressing this demand with limited staff.



Advantages of Clean Slate

- Record clearing is the best remedy. Impacts all collateral consequences (employment, housing, etc). Don't have to enforce legal rights.
- Huge numbers of cases can be sealed.
- Conservation of overburdened resources – legal services, courts, DAs, etc.
- Avoid hefty filing fees.



Clean Slate Is Not Be-All & End-All

- Clean Slate focuses on “easy cases” for which there is categorical consensus; more difficult cases may need petitions before judges.
- Policy design cannot be separated from the electronic data that is available.
- Only governs electronic records, not paper records.



Clean Slate Bill Comes to PA

- Seals most non-violent misdemeanor convictions after 10 conviction-free years, non-convictions 60 days after disposition.
- Expands sealing to first degree misdemeanors.
- First introduced in 2016; moved through the Senate unanimously in 2017. Passed the House by 188-2 on April 11, 2018.



How the PA Bill Was Crafted

- Bipartisan support has been crucial.
- Tailored to PA's technological environment: the data available in centralized databases of the courts and state police.
- Modest expansion of current law.
- Accommodation of many stakeholder requests.



Partners in the PA Campaign

- Justice Action Network – national partners, from the left and right (CAP, Right on Crime, Faith and Freedom Coalition, etc.) – bringing bipartisan credibility, resources.
- CLS – technical expertise, state knowledge.



Lead Sponsors in PA

- Sen. Scott Wagner (R-York)(gubernatorial candidate)
- Sen. Anthony Williams (D-Phila.)
- Rep. Sheryl DeLozier (R-Cumberland)
- Rep. Jordan Harris (D-Phila.)
- Dozens of co-sponsors from both parties in both chambers, as well as the Governor.



Supporters Have Been Unusual Bedfellows

- Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, who served in Admin. of both parties.
- State and local Chambers of Commerce.
- City of Philadelphia.
- Editorials from Reading and York newspapers.
- Op-eds from Pittsburgh DA and Uber.



Supporters, Continued

- Philadelphia Eagles players, lead by Malcolm Jenkins

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ggpxz2rf80pb1zj/Clean Slate Final Master MP4.mp4?dl=0>



Replicating Clean Slate in Other States

- W.K. Kellogg Foundation: funding educational campaigns in Michigan, Colorado and South Carolina.
- Similar campaigns under consideration in other states.
- Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.) has announced a federal Clean Slate bill.



Resources

- Clean Slate toolkit: <http://bit.ly/2GyrjeF>
- Advice from CLS and CAP



For More Information

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Questions?

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