



Jobs

Justice

A Future

A criminal record should not mean a lifetime of blocked opportunities

Too many of our brothers and sisters are trapped in poverty and rejected for jobs and housing because of their criminal records. This bill will increase the efficiency of the criminal and juvenile record sealing process that is cumbersome, slow, and underutilized.

Support HB1763 (Rep. Malia) and SB1037 (Sen. Friedman) An Act providing for easier and greater access to record sealing

- This bill requires the Commissioner of Probation to automatically seal criminal and juvenile records after the applicable waiting periods without the filing of any petition.
- The current law requires peoples to mail petitions to seal to the Commissioner of Probation who processes the requests manually, one-by-one. The present system has backlogs and it takes 4 months to get a reply after filing a petition so jobs and opportunities are often lost.
- Because of backlogs, people who already waited years for sealing are forced to face collateral consequences of their records even longer.
- Sealing has lots of complicated rules. Many people do not know when their records are eligible for sealing, and only learn about sealing after they have already lost the prospect for a job, housing or other opportunity due to their record.
- Studies show record sealing increases access to jobs, but gaps in knowledge about sealing hold countless eligible individuals back from sealing and getting jobs. See [Starr & Prescott study](#) .
- Other states across the nation have successfully implemented similar automated record clearing with great benefits and without harm to those with records. See [Clean Slate Initiative](#).
- Sealing in MA as in other states without an automated process is underutilized and more charges are added to the database than sealed every year. This hurts communities of color the most because Black and Brown people are more likely to have criminal cases.

This bill also reactivates an earlier law which would immediately seal any case that ends in a not guilty finding. These charges will also be eligible for sealing and sealed at time of the not guilty finding unless the person objects to sealing of his or her record.

For information, contact Pauline Quirion at pquirion@gbls.org or 617-603-1554.

SUPPORTERS OF THIS SECOND CHANCE AND OPPORTUNITIES BILL
HB1783/ SB1037: An Act providing for easier and greater access to record sealing

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)
Action Inc. (Gloucester)
American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (ACLU)
Boston Healthcare for the Homeless
Boston SOAR (Street Outreach, Advocacy & Response)
Boston University Criminal Law Clinic
Boston Vet Center
Casa Esperanza
Casa Myrna
Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice
Coalition for Social Justice
Codman Square NDC
Committee for Public Counsel (CPCS)
Community Resources for Justice Inc. (CRJ)
Community Servings (Boston)
Community Work Services
De Novo Center for Justice and Healing
DOVE
EMPath (Economic Mobility Pathways)
EVA Center
Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS)
Jewish Family & Children's Service of Boston
Justice at Work
Justice Bridge Legal Center
Justice 4 Housing
Justice Resource Institute (JRI)
Lawyers Clearinghouse
Lawyers for Civil Rights
Louis D. Brown Peace Institute
Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Mental Health Legal Advisors
Metro West Legal Services
More than Words
New Beginnings Reentry Services

New England Law-Boston- CORI Initiative
Northeastern University School of Law—Criminal Justice Task Force
Prisoners Legal Services of Massachusetts
Project Place
RFK Community Alliance
Roxbury Youthworks
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Boston
Somerville Homeless Coalition
St. Francis House
Strategies for Youth
Strive Boston
Suffolk University Law School—Criminal and Juvenile Delinquency Clinics
Tenants Advocacy Project
Union of Minority Neighborhoods
UMass School of Law—Human Rights at Home Clinic
Veterans Inc. (Worcester)
Veterans Legal Services
Western New England School of Law — Center for Social Justice
Women's Lunch Place Worcester State University—Student Clinic
for Immigrant Justice