



AUTOMATED RECORD SEALING FOR LOW-LEVEL MISDEMEANORS

ISSUE

Millions of Texans have some type of criminal record that can make it nearly impossible to secure a stable job, housing or other resources necessary to be a productive, contributing member of society.

Too often, a criminal record — even for minor, low-level offenses and for people who have completely turned their lives around — is a lifetime sentence to poverty.

CLEAN SLATE POLICY SOLUTION

Texas should automate the record sealing process for those already entitled to an Order of Nondisclosure (OND) under current law — those with first-time, nonviolent misdemeanors who complete deferred adjudication supervision.

A person with an eligible record will no longer have to initiate the sealing process, allowing all who qualify a chance to move past their record, get back to work, and support themselves and their families.

Sealing records clears a path for people to successfully find employment, housing and stability — all of which make communities safer.

Removing criminal record-based barriers to the workforce leads to greater economic stability for families and communities.

- ★ A person with an old misdemeanor conviction earns 16 percent less each year than their peers without a record, and a person with a felony conviction that did not involve imprisonment earns 22 percent less.
- ★ A 2020 study published in the Harvard Law Review followed people whose records were sealed in Michigan and found an almost immediate 23 percent increase in employment and a 23 percent increase in wages.
- ★ Data provided by the Texas Department of Public Safety showed that among people who have obtained a nondisclosure in Texas, less than 1% were subsequently convicted of a violent felony.