

**SB 111**

Chairperson Lynn and Judiciary Committee Members, my name is John Reynolds. I'm the Clean Slate Delaware Campaign Manager at the American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware.

The ACLU of Delaware supports Senate Bill One-Eleven's automation of the mandatory expungement process.

Up to 400,000 Delawareans live with a record. They're our family // our friends // and our neighbors. Records impose barriers to employment, housing, education, and credit, and impact **every community**. But they disproportionately affect Black, Latinx, and low-income ones. //

Automatic mandatory expungement offers a powerful tool **to address this problem**. On average, a person's wages increase 20-percent in the year after receiving an expungement. Expungements enable people to obtain more secure employment, stable housing, and better care for their families. And when people can meet those most basic needs, crime is less likely to occur.

The State Bureau of Identification's analysis for the fiscal note states that more than 290,000 people are eligible for mandatory expungement. Those 290,000 will benefit from an automatic process.

However, we also know that under our current petition based process, **only 6-percent** of eligible people **actually obtain an expungement**. So there is a gap...between the potential and the actual impact of expungements in Delaware. And more than 273,000 people fall into that gap.

That gap is the cost of **not** passing this bill. And that cost...the loss of income, the loss of security, the loss of opportunity for a second chance...is one that Delaware cannot afford.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## SB 112

Chairperson Lynn and Judiciary Committee Members, thank you for your time. My name is John Reynolds, and I'm the Clean Slate Delaware Campaign Manager at ACLU of Delaware. The ACLU of Delaware supports Senate Bill One-Twelve's expansion of eligibility for mandatory expungement.

Even when people make mistakes, if they have done their time, they deserve a second chance at freedom and opportunity. But, all too often, records deprive individuals of that second chance imposing burdens that have no end date and were never part of a judge's sentence. Nearly 9 in 10 employers, 4 in 5 landlords, and 3 in 5 colleges use background checks to screen applicants.

SB One-Twelve's expansion of the conviction records eligible for mandatory expungement can help alleviate these burdens. Research by University of Michigan Law School found that people who obtain expungements have very little risk of recidivism, and in fact, commit crime at a lower rate than the general adult population. This makes sense because expungements after a conviction **are earned**, not given. People earn their mandatory expungements through their actions over multiple years...reintegrating into their families and communities, meeting the challenges of re-entry while remaining crime free, and demonstrating that the person they are today cannot be defined by a prior act from their past.

SB One-Twelve represents an important next step to ensuring our families, friends, and neighbors receive the second chances that they've earned // and can fully contribute to our economy and communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.