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Over 80 Elected Prosecutors and Law Enforcement Leaders Call for Expansion of Clean Slate Initiatives

Leaders call on policymakers to implement policies that will limit the collateral consequences of criminal legal system involvement by automatically expunging and sealing criminal records

Today, Fair and Just Prosecution issued a [joint statement](#) that brought together over 80 elected prosecutors and law enforcement leaders to urge policymakers to expand clean slate initiatives that automatically expunge and seal criminal records. The statement highlights the immense and often lifelong collateral consequences resulting from a criminal record, including challenges obtaining employment, housing, public assistance and education. As Second Chances Month continues – and as one in every three Americans today has a criminal record – the signatories emphasize that people with previous involvement in the criminal legal system and their families deserve the opportunity to move forward without forever being saddled by the closed doors and endless public burdens of their pasts.

“No one should be permanently defined by one mistake, but far too often, a criminal record becomes an interminable obstacle to opportunity, trapping people in an unnecessary, punitive cycle without making any of us safer,” said **Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of Fair and Just Prosecution**, the organizer of the statement. “We must provide those who have been involved in the criminal legal system the support they need to be successful, not hinder them with more overly punitive policies that prevent them from accessing the resources they need. Policymakers must prioritize rehabilitation and commit to giving second chances to those who have earned it – our entire community will be better off as a result.”

Signatories to the statement include **Attorneys General** Hector Balderas (New Mexico), Thomas J. Donovan, Jr. (Vermont), Keith Ellison (Minnesota), Kathleen Jennings (Delaware), Karl Racine (District of Columbia) and Ellen Rosenblum (Oregon); **Police Chiefs** RaShall M. Brackney and Abdul Pridgen; **Sheriffs** Jerry L. Clayton and Garry McFadden; **District Attorneys** and elected local prosecutors from around the nation; and the **National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives** and the **Law Enforcement Action Partnership**. These law enforcement and criminal justice leaders have come together to underscore that the current obstacles to expungement are so significant that people often fail to complete the process. For example, in Michigan, only about six percent of people who are eligible for expungement successfully complete the application process within five years of eligibility. Meanwhile, the statement emphasizes the efficacy of clean slate initiatives, citing research that shows that one year after individuals have their records cleared, they are 11 percent more likely to be employed and earn 22 percent higher wages.

“As a prosecutor and criminal justice leader, I am entrusted by my community to pursue justice and promote public safety, and clean slate policies accomplish both of these objectives,” said **Delaware Attorney General Kathleen Jennings**, a signatory to the statement. “We must end our nation’s obsession with punishment and chart a new path forward focused on rehabilitation. Clean slate initiatives are essential to this vision of justice. We owe it to the millions of Americans with criminal records to take action now.”

The statement explains that in the wake of the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, these initiatives are a smart policy decision: “Clean Slate initiatives can contribute to a strong economic recovery by opening the doors of employment to many who would otherwise continue to be denied opportunities. Employment can be a significant factor in desistance or moving away from criminal activity, but many people struggle to obtain work due to their prior convictions or arrests.”

“Permanently defining people by their criminal records only further erodes trust in the criminal legal system, which threatens the public safety law enforcement leaders work every day to protect,” said **Law Enforcement Action Partnership Executive Director Diane Goldstein** (former Police Lieutenant), another signatory to the statement. “Everyone – regardless of their record – deserves the opportunity to live a healthy and productive life. We need leaders to recognize the human capacity for change and provide a fresh start to those who have served their time.”

Read the [full statement](#) and see the list of signatories below.

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Fair and Just Prosecution is a national network of elected prosecutors working towards common-sense, compassionate criminal justice reforms. To learn more about FJP’s work, visit our [website](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

List of Signatories

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Law Enforcement Organizations

Law Enforcement Action Partnership

National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives