



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
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Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Recognizing the impact of Pennsylvania's Clean Slate law and celebrating its recent expansion.

WHEREAS, nearly five hundred thousand Philadelphians have a criminal record and 90% of employers use background checks in hiring; and

WHEREAS, clearing criminal records can break down barriers to employment, housing, education, and other opportunities; and

WHEREAS, research shows that people who have benefitted from record clearing and people who are able to access good jobs have very low rates of recidivism, leading to more public safety in our communities; and

WHEREAS, after decades of helping people with criminal records obtain expungements and pardons one at a time, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia conceived and designed a first-in-the-nation law, known as Clean Slate, to automatically seal certain criminal records to help hundreds of thousands of people at a time; and

WHEREAS, a bipartisan coalition, including people living with criminal records, Pennsylvania House Representatives Jordan Harris and Sheryl Delozier, Pennsylvania Senator Tony Williams, the Justice Action Network, business communities across the Commonwealth, the Philadelphia Eagles, and Community Legal Services of Philadelphia created and passed Clean Slate in 2018 to give people with criminal records a fair chance at opportunity; and

WHEREAS, according to the Pennsylvania State Police and Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, more than 45 million cases have been sealed under Clean Slate, helping more than 1.2 million Pennsylvanians get a fresh start; and

WHEREAS, due to inequality in the criminal legal system, Black and Brown individuals often receive harsher sentences than their White counterparts even when being convicted of the same crime, making felony record clearing a vital way to address racial inequity; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the importance of expanding Clean Slate record sealing to cover certain felony convictions and shorten the waiting periods for misdemeanors and summary offenses to be sealed, the original Clean Slate coalition and allies such as the NBA Social Justice Coalition and the Philadelphia 76ers worked together to advocate for Clean Slate 3.0, an expansion of this successful law; and

WHEREAS, Clean Slate 3.0 was passed through the Pennsylvania General Assembly and signed by Governor Josh Shapiro in December 2023; and now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Philadelphia hereby recognizes and honors the expansion of Pennsylvania's Clean Slate law, led by Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, and the impact of criminal record sealing for Philadelphians in need of a fresh start.