

**Prepared Testimony of Sonja Starr
Michigan House Judiciary Committee, September 24, 2019**

My name is Sonja Starr. I am a Professor of Law and co-director of the Empirical Legal Studies Center at the University of Michigan Law School. Along with my colleague, Professor J.J. Prescott, I have recently completed a major study of criminal record set-asides in Michigan. The study will soon be published in the Harvard Law Review, but it is already available in working paper form, and I am submitting it into the record for your review. Today, I am here to briefly summarize what we found, and to explain why those findings provide strong support for the expansion of Michigan's set-aside law, including the adoption of an automated process for set-asides, otherwise known as the Clean Slate bill.

I'll start by previewing that conclusion. The package of bills you have before you would represent a big improvement versus our current set-aside law. But with a few amendments, we could get to a really great law, one that would truly improve hundreds of thousands of lives in Michigan and make our state safer. Here are the most important changes we recommend:

- (1) Shorten the waiting period for automated set-asides to five years. Ten years is unnecessary and counterproductive from a public safety perspective, and interferes with the ability to get people help when they need it.
- (2) Eliminate the requirement that restitution be fully paid before the set-aside, which will both punish the poor and create serious technical problems in implementation.
- (3) Eliminate the special exceptions and limitations assigned to "assaultive crimes" and "serious misdemeanors" in both the automated and petition-based set-aside process. These distinctions are not supported by recidivism patterns and only serve to limit the bill's public safety and economic benefits.
- (4) Automate the process of expungement for marijuana convictions, which is the only way to make sure most people aren't excluded from its benefits.
- (5) Eliminate the numeric caps on the numbers of felonies and misdemeanors that can be cleared. These numbers are not good measures of the overall severity of a record or of continuing recidivism risk, so relying on them introduces arbitrariness.
- (6) Simplify the petition-based process, allowing online resolution wherever possible and eliminating fees.

I'll elaborate on each of these points a bit later, but first I will back up and tell you about our research findings.

To conduct our study, we worked closely with the Michigan State Police, the Unemployment Insurance and Workforce Development Agencies, and the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, under a data security agreement. We were able to obtain the full criminal histories as well as UIA's wage and employment data for everyone who received a criminal record set-aside in Michigan through the year 2014, as well as a large comparison group of people who were legally eligible for set-asides but did not receive them. This enabled us to conduct the first comprehensive statewide study in the United States of the effectiveness of a policy of sealing criminal records.

What we found included some good news and some bad news. The good news is that people who got set-asides had great outcomes. They had incredibly low subsequent crime rates, and they saw big increases in wages and employment rates. The bad news is that only a very small group of people actually get set-asides under the current law and the current legal process. Among those who are legally eligible for set-asides, only 6.5% have applied for and received them within five years of becoming legally eligible. And the eligibility requirements are so stringent that the great majority of people with records don't even qualify in the first place—so we're talking about a small fraction of a small fraction.

Professor Prescott and I both believe that these findings argue very strongly for the expansion of access to set-asides in Michigan. Set-asides are good news for people with records and their families, and meanwhile, they don't threaten public safety and if anything, probably improve it. We should let more people take advantage of the great potential of set-asides, both by getting rid of some of the arbitrary hurdles to eligibility, and by eliminating the very burdensome process that eligible people have to go through to actually receive a set-aside.

Let me say a little more about each of these research findings before moving on to discuss the new legislative package that you are considering.

First, crime and public safety. Usually when people object to set-aside laws, this is what they raise concerns about. The idea is that to protect ourselves from the future crime of people with records the public needs access to those records—that we shouldn't allow potentially dangerous people to conceal their criminal pasts. And I understand where this concern is coming from. Obviously public safety is an incredibly important policy priority. But I'm here to provide some reassurance. Both our specific research findings on Michigan set-asides, and the much broader body of research on the causes of crime and patterns of repeat offending, strongly indicate that crime concerns do *not* provide a good reason to make it difficult to get a set-aside. And in fact, there's good reason to believe that the Michigan public will be *safer* if we expand set-aside access.

Let's start with our own findings. We looked at the full criminal records of everyone who'd ever gotten a set-aside in Michigan, tens of thousands of people, and looked at whether they got rearrested or reconvicted afterwards. Overwhelmingly, they didn't. Within five years of getting a set-aside, only 7% had been rearrested for anything, and only 4% had been reconvicted of any crime—and among those that were arrested or reconvicted, it was overwhelmingly just for misdemeanors, including driving misdemeanors.

If we focus on the types of crimes that people are really worried about when they raise public safety objections, the numbers are tiny. Only 1% of set-aside recipients are convicted of any felony within the next five years. And only 0.6% are convicted of any violent crime, whether a misdemeanor or a felony. Put another way, about 99% of those who receive set-asides will NOT be convicted of a subsequent felony or violent crime, over a five year period.

And the crime numbers remained extremely low no matter what subset of the sample you looked at. People who had a felony set aside, people who had a violent crime set aside, people who got

their set-aside right after they satisfied the five-year waiting period, people who got the set-aside much later—all of these groups had very low recidivism rates.

Someone might respond: these numbers may be low, but they still aren't zero. And that's true. But if you followed *any* group of tens of thousands of Michigan residents for five years, you wouldn't get zero arrests or zero convictions. Every population has some rate of crime. And as it turns out, the crime rates we observe among set-aside recipients in Michigan are actually substantially *lower than the average* for the general population, by which I mean all Michigan adults. And that's despite the fact that set-aside recipients tend to have lower incomes than the average Michigan resident and are more likely to be male—factors that are statistically associated with higher crime rates in general.

So why are the numbers so low? There are two basic ways to explain it: the set-asides could be *helping* to reduce crime rates, perhaps by giving people access to jobs, or this group of people could just be at very low risk of crime to begin with. Our data didn't allow us to disentangle these two explanations, and it's very plausible that *both* of them are right. To further inform this discussion, we can look to the broader body of criminological research on factors predicting criminal recidivism.

That research tells us, first of all, that those who obtain set-asides under the current law are probably very low risk to begin with—even people with felony or violent-crime records. And that's mainly because we know they've all satisfied the five-year waiting period—they have at least five clean years since their last conviction, or since they were released from incarceration. There are a number of studies of what criminologists call “desistance” from crime—the process by which people age out of or otherwise give up criminal offending. And those studies tell us that after a few clean years, it's pretty safe to assume that a person is done committing crimes—they won't come back into the criminal justice system if they haven't done so already. In general, the high-risk period for criminal recidivism is right away—the risk drops a lot just in the first year or two. There are varied estimates of exactly how much time it takes for a past conviction to lose *all* value as a predictor of future crime, compared to the general population average. But in all the studies, five years is at least enough for it to lose *almost* all of its predictive value—that is, reconviction and rearrest rates after that point are always pretty low. In our sample, they may have been even lower yet because the people in question, who met the eligibility requirements under our pre-2011 law, were people with just one conviction, and because they were a self-selected sample of people who pursued and obtained set-asides.

Another possibility is that receiving the set-asides lowered this group's crime rate even further. That theory is also supported by criminological research on the causes and predictors of crime and criminal recidivism. A large range of studies suggests that access to employment and stable housing are significant factors that help people to avoid committing more crimes. So if having a criminal record set aside helps people to get jobs and rent apartments, that's good news for public safety and crime control.

Importantly, there's *no* research supporting the opposite theory—the idea that having one's criminal record be accessible to the public helps to protect the public from crime. There's just no good reason to think that would be true. Sure, knowing about an individual's criminal record

might help one particular employer avoid hiring that individual, or one particular landlord avoid renting to them. But the individual is still going to exist, they're still going to be out there in society, and it's not like *everyone* they interact with every day is going to know about their record and somehow be on guard against them. Whatever crime risk they pose doesn't disappear because they got denied a job or a home—in fact, the risk probably goes up. That one employer or landlord *might* arguably be better off, but the public at large is worse off, because all in all, the unemployed or homeless or housing-unstable person poses a greater crime risk. And when we think about public safety, we need to be thinking about the shared interests of the public at large, not just the narrow interests of whoever wants to run a background search on some individual.

That brings us to our next major finding: the connection between set-asides and jobs. As background, there's lots of research out there that shows that criminal records are a major barrier to job access. For example, in an earlier study that I carried out with an economist named Amanda Agan, we filled out thousands of fictitious online job applications and randomized whether the applicants had a criminal conviction on their records. The applicants were otherwise identical, and the criminal convictions were pretty minor. Applicants without records got 61% more callbacks from employers. And there's other research in the same vein.

Now, even though nobody really doubts that criminal records make it harder to get a job, some people are skeptical that set-asides can reverse this effect. They say: in the age of the Internet, the genie can't be put back into the bottle. Employers will Google news stories, or find some other way to get the information. And of course that is probably going to be true in some cases. But the study that Professor Prescott and I carried out offers good news. Even if the effectiveness of set-asides might not be perfect, getting one still makes a huge difference to an individual's job prospects. And that shouldn't be surprising. Most crimes are routine and actually don't generate huge headlines, and most employers don't actually rely on Google for criminal record information—they do background checks. Set-asides in effect take the sealed conviction out of the background check databases, and this makes a big difference.

Here's how we studied it. We knew that it's hard to directly compare the people who receive set-asides under current law to other people with records who don't—so we didn't take that approach. Instead, we simply compared set-aside recipients to themselves, before and after the set-aside. We used regression methods to control for their prior employment patterns, and then estimated how much the set-aside changed the employment trajectory that they had been on. And we also controlled for broader patterns in the Michigan economy, to make sure that events like the Great Recession didn't distort our analyses.

The great news is that set-aside recipients saw large improvements in their employment situations—on average, about a 23% increase in wages within the first year after the set-aside, with wages stabilizing after that. This was almost entirely driven by unemployed people finding work and by people who were at the fringes of employment, for example working a few hours a week, finding more stable and better-paying jobs.

Let's put that number in perspective. A 23% increase in a year is huge. State governments often invest lots of money in programs to help unemployed people, and particularly people with records, get jobs—things like job training. It's almost unheard of for those kinds of programs to

have an effect anywhere close to 23%. And unlike all those programs, granting a set-aside already costs the state extremely little—and it will be even less when the process is automated. This is a great investment that we can expect to pay off for Michigan financially, because getting people jobs gets them off of public benefits and into the taxpayer base, not to mention probably making them less likely to commit costly crimes and require costly future incarceration.

Now, it's possible that some of the turnaround for set-aside recipients was because of other things they were doing at the same time. Under the current law people choose when and if to apply for set-asides, so people who apply for them may often be doing so because they are actively searching for a job. So you might think, maybe it's that job-search motivation that helps, not the set-aside. Still, we think there are good reasons to believe that receiving the set-aside was at least a very big part of the reason for these huge gains. It takes on average four to six months to process a set-aside application, but people didn't begin to see their employment prospects turn around until they actually received the set-aside, not when they first applied for them. And we also looked at a subset of about a quarter of the set-aside recipients, who applied for their set-asides right away after getting through the five-year waiting period. That group had just as big employment gains, even though in their case, the timing of their application doesn't seem to have been shaped by some ongoing job search, but instead just by getting past that five-year mark.

So let's turn to the bad news from our study: the set-aside law is helping way fewer people than it could. About 2500 people a year get their criminal convictions set aside each year in Michigan, but that's a small drop in the bucket compared to the number of new criminal convictions each year. So the number of people grappling with the burden of a criminal conviction is constantly growing.

Part of the issue is that the eligibility requirements under the current law are very stringent and contain some arbitrary exclusions, such as arbitrary caps on the numbers of convictions one can have, the exclusion of driving offenses, and so forth. So only a small subset of people with records even have the possibility of a set-aside. The bills before you will improve on this situation, although we think they could and should go further.

But it's not just eligibility. Even among those who *are* legally eligible for set-asides, very few actually get them. We looked at a cohort of eligible people and found that only 6.5% of them received set-asides within five years of the date that they first qualified. Since most people who get set-asides do get them within five years, we estimate that under 12% of those who are eligible will ever get set-asides in their lifetime—unless, that is, the law changes to make things easier for them.

This low set-aside rate is not because judges are denying large numbers of applications. The Michigan State Police told us that 75% of set-aside applications are granted—and for some of the 25% that are denied, it's because some eligibility requirement was not met. In general, when applicants meet the legal criteria, Michigan judges are happy to grant set-asides. They know that a person having made it five years with no further reoffending is a big win, and they want to reward that success, and help people to maintain it, with a clean slate. Also, even though

prosecutors and crime victims have the right to oppose set-asides, that doesn't happen very often either. For the most part, prosecutors oppose them only when the person is legally ineligible.

The problem is that most qualified set-aside candidates never apply for them. And this might seem like a pretty big puzzle. Why not apply, given how much the set-aside can help?

Our data couldn't directly answer that "why" question, so we interviewed a bunch of Michigan set-aside experts, including lawyers who work with people with records. There was a clear consensus among them as to what the problems are.

First, many people have no idea that they are eligible for set-asides. They may never have heard of the law, or they don't understand its requirements, which is not surprising. The law is long and technical and parts of it are complicated even for lawyers to interpret—and in general, set-aside candidates do not have lawyers to help them. Some legal aid organizations have stepped up to help in some counties, but they can't possibly keep up with the massive demand across the state.

Beyond that, even for people who do know they are eligible, the set-aside process is hugely burdensome. Applicants have to show up at court at least twice—once to go to the court clerk and request a certified copy of their conviction, and once for the hearing. You have to do this in the same court you were convicted in, so if you now live somewhere else, that could be practically impossible. Applicants also have to go to a police station, to get fingerprinted, and often separately to a notary public. They have to fill out four copies of the application and mail them to different places. There's a \$50 application fee, currently non-waivable even for those who can't afford it, plus the fingerprinting and the certified record and all that postage cost money too. The total is usually about \$100, not including the cost of transportation, taking time off work, getting childcare, and so forth. All this is a major strain especially on people who are already struggling with stretched-thin resources. If you don't have a job, those financial costs are a lot. If you do have a job, getting the time away from it may simply be impossible.

And beyond these concrete factors, this often is an extremely stressful process. For many people with records, their experience with the criminal justice system was the worst experience of their lives. They may still be ashamed of their records and of their own criminal conduct. And now it's five years later, maybe ten years later, and they haven't reoffended—they have moved past that dark chapter in their lives. So the idea of going back to court twice, going to the police to get printed, seeing the prosecutor again and the judge that sentenced them and maybe the crime victim—that makes jumping through all those administrative hoops and paying those fees seem even more daunting.

So those are the problems. Fortunately, there's a solution, and the bills that are now before you will go a long way toward achieving it. They are not perfect and I'm going to suggest some amendments, because while we are engaging in this process we should try to get the best versions that we can. But even exactly as is, this package of reforms would be a big improvement versus what we have now.

One thing the bills do is to correct some of the arbitrary exclusions in the eligibility requirements. The exclusion of driving offenses, for example, has never made any sense at all. I don't know of any other states that have this exclusion, and it's great that the bill gets rid of it.

Another important improvement is the "one bad night" reform, which addresses what happens when multiple criminal convictions stem out of the same incident. In some of my other work, I research prosecutorial decision-making—especially what charges prosecutors choose to bring, and how they decide what to drop in plea-bargaining. And I can say that in general, the decision to just bring one charge versus multiple charges out of the same incident is really just a matter of discretion that usually doesn't mean much or anything at all about the severity of the case. Lots of crimes in the criminal code have overlapping definitions, and the prosecutor can choose to throw everything at the defendant, or to just pick the most serious offense or the one that best fits the facts. Plus, the multiple offenses could *all* be pretty minor, misdemeanors for example, and if there's more than two the defendant would be disqualified under existing law even though the sum total of their criminal conduct is less serious than the crimes of many people who *are* eligible. This is arbitrary and unfair, and the Legislature should take this opportunity to correct it.

It's also great that the bill removes limits on the number of misdemeanors that can be cleared through the petition-based process. Those were arbitrary and also not indicative of a record's total seriousness or the likelihood of reoffense. Numeric limits in general don't make much sense, and this provision is one step toward eliminating them.

These changes to the eligibility requirements for the existing, petition-based set-aside process are important. But they aren't the *most* important part of this package of bills, because again, the petition-based process is so burdensome that hardly anyone takes advantage of it. We could have a perfect and generous set of eligibility rules, and yet if we keep requiring people to know about those rules and jump through a million hoops, the potential offered by set-asides will never become a reality for the vast majority of those who could benefit. And that would be a big loss for Michigan, in addition to the affected people and their families.

So the most important of these bills is the "Clean Slate" bill requiring automated clearance of some records, and so we need to make sure we make that form of relief widely available as well. Automation is the simplest, best solution to the problems of set-aside access that we identified. Pennsylvania, which nearly unanimously passed an automated set-aside bill last year, is already well along the way of clearing the large backlog of records that need to be retroactively cleared. By all reports, it has been simple, effective, and inexpensive. It saves money for the state, and makes the benefits of set-asides available to all those who qualify for them. This is a win-win.

The package of bills could be improved in several ways to make the set-aside process more inclusive and more effective. I will return now to the set of recommendations that I previewed at the beginning of my testimony:

- (1) The ten-year waiting period for automated set-asides is longer than it needs to be.

Again, in our research, we found that set-aside recipients were very low risk after five years—even people who originally had violent crime convictions or felony convictions. And there was only a minimal difference in recidivism rates between people who got their set-asides as soon as they could, after five years, and those who waited ten or more years.

I understand the intuition behind having *some* waiting period, but it's important to remember that waiting periods come at a big cost. For people who are struggling because of their records to get jobs, occupational licenses, housing, loans, educational access, and so forth, ten years is a really long time to wait for a second chance.

And remember, set-asides very probably *reduce* crime risk, so even if a shorter waiting period did mean that a slightly higher-risk group gets set-asides, that's actually a *good* thing for public safety, not a bad thing. If set-asides reduce crime risk, then we should want people to get set-asides when they are still at some risk of committing crime. The longer we make them wait, the more we are passing up on the chance to improve public safety by helping people with records to stay crime-free.

On balance, we should think of overly long waiting periods as *harming* public safety, not protecting it.

I would recommend simply reducing this period to five years for both misdemeanors and felonies. If it were up to me, for misdemeanors I would actually choose an even shorter waiting period, like a year or two. Misdemeanor convictions can mess up people's lives, and the employment benefits that we identified for sealing misdemeanor convictions were almost as large as for sealing felonies. But they are minor crimes by definition, and so I don't see who we are protecting by keeping them public and available in background check databases for so long. But certainly, ten years is gratuitous for both misdemeanors and felonies, and five years would be an improvement.

(2) The requirement that all restitution be paid before the individual becomes eligible for an automated set-aside should be eliminated.

I understand the reasoning behind the requirement—restitution is part of the sentence. I am *not* suggesting that the underlying obligation to *pay* the restitution be eliminated. Set-asides do not wipe out the record for all purposes—their main effect is to seal the record so that third parties like employers can't see it. And it would be easy to craft the legislation to make sure that the record is still available as needed to facilitate collection processes, and to specify that the set-aside does not eliminate the duty to pay. That is, we can craft the legislation to make sure that the *consequences* of a set-aside do not interfere with payment of restitution. We do not have to craft it to make *eligibility* for the set-aside depend on whether restitution has already been paid.

When people haven't paid their restitution, even though they have long since completed the rest of their sentence and have been living law-abiding lives, there's a reason for it. It's because they can't afford it. So this requirement will surely work to exclude financially struggling people from the benefits of set-asides—that is, exactly the people who likely need those benefits the most. If

you want people to pay restitution, you should *want* exactly these people to get access to jobs, so they can afford to pay. Excluding them is counterproductive.

I also believe that the scope of this problem is likely to be greatly magnified by a technical concern, which has been explained to me by technical experts working on this issue. The basic issue is that although the number of otherwise-qualified set-aside candidates who owe restitution is actually quite small, there is a substantially larger number of people who owe other kinds of fees related to their criminal cases. The judicial and corrections process typically result in a large number of fees being accrued, and a great many people cannot afford to pay all of them.

On the face of it, the bill is not crafted to exclude people who haven't paid these kinds of fees. But it will likely have that effect in practice. As I understand it, the database that will be used to identify qualifying candidates for automatic set-asides identifies people who have outstanding debts, but it does not differentiate between restitution and other kinds of fines and fees that are owed. So in an understandable attempt to make sure a small number of people pay their restitution, the bill may inadvertently result in a much larger number of people having set-asides denied because, due to their poverty, they are unable to pay some other kind of fee. That would be a really bad result, and it would be better just to get rid of the restitution requirement.

(3) The legislature should lift the exclusion of assaultive crimes and “serious misdemeanors” from the automated set-aside process, and should also eliminate the different treatment that assaultive crimes get in the petition-based process.

Again, there's every reason to believe both that set-asides *reduce* crime risk, and that five years—much less ten years—is plenty to bring down the baseline risk of reoffense to a very low level. I understand that there's a fear that people who were convicted of violent crimes will commit other violent crimes, so that's who we need to be afraid of. But in our study—again, with the existing five-year waiting period—even people who had violent offenses set aside only had a 0.8% rate of being convicted of another violent crime within the next five years. That is vanishingly low. Put another way, over 99% of those who got violent crimes set aside did *not* have a violent reoffense. The fact is that even people who have committed violent crimes grow up, they clean up their acts, they can become contributing members of society. But because of the stigma associated with violent convictions on their records, they may especially need the benefits of set-asides to do so. And if anything, those benefits are likely to *reduce* whatever small risk they still pose to public safety.

Even if the legislature were to get rid of the restriction on assaultive crimes entirely, there would still be exclusions from the automated process for people with serious felonies carrying a potential penalty of ten years or more, and the most serious felonies as well as sex offenses and crimes against children are excluded from both the petition process and the automated process. So we aren't talking about the most serious violent offenses anyway. Somebody who got in a bar fight ten years ago and got an assault conviction should not be prevented forever from having a clean slate, or required to go through an arduous petition process that other people with records don't have to go through.

And this goes double for the category of “serious misdemeanors,” which is almost a contradiction in terms. Misdemeanors by definition are crimes that our legal system has chosen to treat as less serious than felonies. So it does not make sense to say that people with this class of misdemeanors cannot be eligible for automatic set-asides, even though many people with felony convictions *are* eligible. This restriction should be eliminated.

(4) The automated set-aside procedure should be extended to marijuana offenses with no waiting period. The current package of bill makes people go through the petition process to have marijuana offenses expunged even though, per the will of a strong majority of the Michigan electorate, those are not crimes anymore in Michigan. But our research shows that petition-based processes, with all their costs and procedural hurdles, just don’t accomplish their goals. If we believe in a clean slate for people whose records still have these obsolete crimes on them, we should simply automate the process, which is technologically easy and cheaper for the state.

The only objection I can think of is that perhaps some people pled down to marijuana offenses when they actually had more serious offenses that they could have been convicted of instead. I doubt that this is really that common, because if there’s a genuinely serious offense that is provable, prosecutors usually are not going to be satisfied with a marijuana conviction. But in any case, it’s not fair to try to punish people forever for offenses that they were never actually convicted of. And even if this is the concern, there are easy enough solutions. For example, after eligibility for automated expungement has been determined by the algorithm, district attorneys’ offices could be presented with a list of marijuana set-asides that are about to be put into effect, and given the opportunity to object if there was some special situation; if there is no objection after some short period, perhaps 30 days, then the set-aside can be put into effect.

(5) The numeric caps on the number of convictions to be set-aside should be lifted.

The current legislation allows two felonies or four misdemeanors to be set aside through the automated process. These numeric caps should be eliminated. Most states don’t have caps like these, and there’s no real reason for them, especially when you have a long waiting period, because then even those who have committed quite a few crimes still haven’t committed any in a long time. Again, I would especially suggest lifting this requirement for misdemeanors. If someone has gone through a period of homelessness, addiction, or similar struggles, it would not be surprising at all to see them accrue five or ten misdemeanors during that period—often petty things like public intoxication. But if they then go five years—much less ten years—without another conviction, it’s pretty clear that they’ve left that chapter of their lives behind them.

(6) Eliminate application fees and simplify the petition-based process.

Until we get to the point of automating *all* set-asides in Michigan, I think it is important to try to reduce hurdles for people trying to navigate the petition-based process whenever possible, as long as we have these two parallel processes. And the petition process doesn’t have to be as arduous, expensive, and stressful as it is. Ideally, there should be an online process for applying and resolving the case, to eliminate the burden of going to courts and the police. Especially if the prosecution and victim (if applicable) do not choose to oppose the set-aside, the requirement to physically appear in court should be eliminated. There’s no reason you should have to show

up in person to get a certified record. There's no reason you should need a notary. And perhaps the very simplest step that could be taken is the elimination of the mandatory \$50 fee. It may not seem like much, and it *isn't* much to the state's bottom line—especially when you consider the fiscal benefits of helping set-aside recipients get jobs and get into the tax base. But it *is* a lot to people who are broke, which unfortunately is too often the case for people with records.

With those changes, this will be a truly transformative, groundbreaking bill that makes Michigan a stronger, fairer, and safer place. Michigan will become one of the leading states in the national movement to give people with records a second chance, and we can all be proud of that. I urge the legislature and Governor Whitmer to make this vision a reality.