

Representative Graham Filler  
Judiciary Committee Chair

Dear Representative Filler,

Hello my name is Dennis Jokela. I am a Reserve Deputy Sheriff Corporal with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff Department. I am also the Chaplin for the Sheriff Department. I am also a Pastor and have worked with many people over the years. I have an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity as well. I am a decorated US Navy Veteran of Vietnam and Cambodia.

I married a year ago and became a Grand Father to 8 children. One of which is why I am here today in support of him and thousands of other young people.

He as an 18 year old from a broken home struggled with rebellion in his teenage years as many young people do in today's world do. He had an evening of poor choices at the age of 18 and has paid severely for it. He was drunk driving and when caught he physically ran on foot from the police. He was originally charged with a felony and 10 misdemeanors, later it was reduced to the felony and 4 misdemeanors. He served his time and paid his debt to society and continues to pay every day of his life and will for the rest of his life, under current Michigan law.

He has been a responsible citizen ever since that fateful night. He is a hard worker and has worked continually and worked his way upward. He has been forced to work out of the area in order to gain meaningful employment that is upwardly mobile. He now installs cell phone towers and has for years as a supervisor and now is a foreman of a crew of 15 individuals. He had tried and pursued joining the US Marine Corp but in the end was denied due to his record. He has great character and would make an awesome career Marine.

He is now almost 24 years old at what point has he paid enough for an admitted evening of bad choices?

Under current Michigan law he cannot ever have his record cleared of these nonviolent mistakes. I support legislation to expand our expungement laws to bring the life sentence of his record along with thousands of other Michigan citizens who have changed their lives around to an end. Most other states have expanded expungement laws for non-violent crimes.

I support HB 4980-HB 4985 I also ask for expungement of infractions after 5 years of no further infractions. I would be happy to help and assist in any way that I can. Please feel free to contact me and ask.

I ask you to please give the good citizens of Michigan like my Grand Son and thousands of our fellow citizens a hope and a future.

Respectfully,  
Dennis Jokela D.D.  
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Cc

Brandt Iden  
Tom Barrett  
Jim Rumsfeld  
Beth Griffin