



SMART JUSTICE • CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

# CLEAN SLATE INITIATIVE

## SUPPORTING SECOND CHANCES

Chambers of commerce across the country are seeking to combat workforce shortages by reducing obstacles people face as they seek employment after incarceration. Research shows that employment is one of the most effective tools for decreasing recidivism and helping people continue on the path to self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, having a criminal record, even a minor one, can be a permanent roadblock for people seeking to re-enter the workforce.

## CLEAN SLATE

Most states have a process for clearing, sealing, or expunging a criminal record, but due to lack of awareness, legal counsel, limited resources, and the complexity of the process, very few people legally eligible to clear their records ever obtain relief.

Clean Slate offers a solution. Clean Slate is a bipartisan policy that has garnered support from organizations across the political spectrum. Clean Slate empowers states to automate the process for clearing old criminal records for individuals who remain crime-free for a set period of time.

When a criminal record is sealed or expunged, it no longer shows up on background checks and individuals can legally answer “no” when asked if they have been convicted of a crime. This allows individuals who have paid their debt to society to access employment, housing, education, and opportunity.

Automating the criminal record-clearing process reduces strain on the court system, saves taxpayers money, and opens doors for millions of hardworking individuals seeking jobs that will allow them to move beyond past mistakes and create better lives for their families. That’s why chambers across the country are exploring Clean Slate policies.

### FAST FACTS

- **1 in 3** Americans has a criminal record
- **9 in 10** employers use background checks in hiring
- **4 in 5** landlords use background checks to screen potential tenants
- **3 in 5** colleges use background checks as part of their application process
- Job seekers with a criminal record are **50 percent** less likely to get a callback or job offer
- **\$87 billion** is lost in annual GDP due to shutting people with criminal records out of the labor market

---

***“In addition to reducing strain on courts and saving taxpayer dollars, Clean Slate will allow thousands of willing, eligible workers to join the employment ranks. This is especially important in Utah as our economy is growing faster than the pace at which we can produce the skilled workforce necessary to meet labor demands.”***

***– Derek Miller, President and CEO, Salt Lake Chamber***

---

---

***“The Clean Slate legislation opened doors to many hardworking women and men who want an opportunity to move beyond their past and create better lives for themselves and their families. The work we did together to help create these new opportunities should make us proud.”***

***– Matt Smith, President, Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce***

---

## **WHO BENEFITS FROM CLEAN SLATE?**

- **Justice-involved individuals and their families** will have greater access to stable housing and jobs.
- **Businesses** will benefit from access to a full and competitive labor pool.
- **The criminal justice system** will see a reduced workload as transactional costs of record-clearing petitions are automated.
- **Communities will be safer** due to lower recidivism rates.

## **WHAT CAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE DO?**

Chambers can play an essential role in helping employers cultivate an untapped segment of the workforce, ensure smart government spending, and increase public safety by supporting policies and programs related to Clean Slate and second-chance hiring.

Allowing individuals with criminal records to have a clean slate can be life changing — and transform communities for the better. Chambers can support this common-sense policy change and provide education and resources to their member businesses and HR departments as they navigate this new process. Some ways that chambers have already engaged their members include:

- Supporting Clean Slate legislation in their states and through various chamber communications channels.
- Building connections between member businesses and community-based organizations that serve people with criminal records to source job-ready applicants.
- Talking with member businesses about the importance of Clean Slate, along with second-chance hiring, through employer forums, one-on-one meetings and trainings/seminars on hiring practices.
- Sharing resources with member businesses to raise awareness of Clean Slate and second-chance hiring practices.

## **RESOURCES**

- [Clean Slate Campaign](#)
- [Clean Slate Toolkit](#)
- [Salt Lake Chamber Op-Ed: How to Build a Society of Second Chances](#)
- [Statement from Greater Pittsburgh Chamber on Passage of Clean Slate](#)
- [Chamber Executive Magazine, Fall 2017: Second Chances](#)

ACCE Staff Contact: Will Burns | (703) 998-3571 | [wburns@acce.org](mailto:wburns@acce.org)

**More ACCE Resources Available Online:**  
**[www.acce.org/secondchances](http://www.acce.org/secondchances)**