



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1738-2021, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1738

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.1553B/A.6399A, the Clean Slate Act.

By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Members Adams and Rosenthal

Whereas, According to the National Institute of Justice, nearly 1 in 3 American adults has a prior arrest or criminal conviction on their record; and

Whereas, According to the Legal Action Center, in New York even a single past conviction can mean a lifetime of obstacles and barriers to critical employment, licensing, housing and educational opportunities; and

Whereas, According to Clean Slate New York, a coalition of over 100 advocacy groups, nearly 2.3 million New Yorkers are shackled by their convictions and perpetually excluded from our state's economy and society; and

Whereas, According to the Brennan Center for Justice, people who have been to prison lose an average of \$484,400 in earnings over their lifetime; and

Whereas, As determined by the Economic Policy Institute, racial disparities and socio-economic discrimination are rampant throughout the criminal legal system, and statistical data shows that convictions for even low-level offenses result in cyclical harm and structural instability for individuals, families and communities; and

Whereas, On January 13, 2021, New York Senator Zellnor Myrie and New York Assembly Member Catalina Cruz introduced S.1553B/A.6399A, the Clean Slate Act, which would automatically seal conviction records after someone has completed their sentence, is off of parole or probation, has not incurred any new

charges or convictions in New York State during the waiting period, and the conviction to be sealed is not a sex offense; and

Whereas, According to reports from various media outlets, only approximately 2,500 of an estimated 600,000 eligible people, or less than 0.5 percent, have had their records sealed since New York's current application-based sealing law went into effect in 2017; and

Whereas, Giving people access to jobs, housing, education and licenses to practice a trade increases their participation in the economy and reduces the likelihood they will return to prison, thereby making our communities safer and more prosperous; and

Whereas, Numerous other states, including Pennsylvania, Michigan, Utah and Connecticut, have already passed "Clean Slate" legislation; and

Whereas, Excluding individuals with criminal records from full participation in society creates a system of perpetual punishment, contributes to intergenerational trauma and exacerbates racial and economic inequality; and

Whereas, The Clean Slate Act works to ensure that individuals are well integrated into society and have opportunities to move forward after having paid their debts to society; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.1553B/A.6399A, the Clean Slate Act.

LS #17296/18005
09/09/2021
AH