

**Clean Slate**

CLEARINGHOUSE

A project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor  
and the U.S. Department of Justice



**Justice Center**

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

# The Clean Slate Model

## Sealing Criminal Records through Automated Computer Queries

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# Speakers

**Sharon Dietrich**, Litigation Director,  
Community Legal Services of Philadelphia

**Rebecca Vallas**, Vice President, Poverty to  
Prosperity Program, Center for American Progress

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### Clearinghouse

- Online clearinghouse of each state's adult and juvenile record clearance policies, resources, guides, and legal service providers

### Audience

- Legal service providers, reentry and workforce service providers, people with criminal records, policymakers

### Goals

- Provide accessible, up-to-date information on record clearance policies across the country
- Increase capacity of legal service providers and create a community of practice for record clearance

[cleanslateclearinghouse.org](https://cleanslateclearinghouse.org)

The Council of State Governments Justice Center

# What is Clean Slate?

- Clean Slate is a policy option for the mass sealing of minor convictions and non-convictions. It is enabled by automatic computer queries, instead of the filing of individual petitions.
- Sealing means the information is available to law enforcement, but not the public.



# Origins of the Concept

- Featured recommendation in One Strike and You're Out (Center for American Progress, Dec. 2014)
- There is almost unlimited demand for sealing by people with records. We looked for a way of addressing this demand with limited staff.



# Advantages of Clean Slate

- Record clearing is the best remedy. Impacts all collateral consequences (employment, housing, etc). Don't have to enforce legal rights.
- Huge numbers of cases can be sealed.
- Conservation of overburdened resources – legal services, courts, DAs, etc.
- Avoid hefty filing fees.



# Clean Slate Is Not Be-All & End-All

- Clean Slate focuses on “easy cases” for which there is categorical consensus; more difficult cases may need petitions before judges.
- Policy design cannot be separated from the electronic data that is available.
- Only governs electronic records, not paper records.



# Clean Slate Bill Comes to PA

- Seals most non-violent misdemeanor convictions after 10 conviction-free years, non-convictions 60 days after disposition.
- Expands sealing to first degree misdemeanors.
- First introduced in 2016; moved through the Senate unanimously in 2017. Passed the House by 188-2 on April 11, 2018.





# How the PA Bill Was Crafted

- Bipartisan support has been crucial.
- Tailored to PA's technological environment: the data available in centralized databases of the courts and state police.
- Modest expansion of current law.
- Accommodation of many stakeholder requests.



# Partners in the PA Campaign

- Justice Action Network – national partners, from the left and right (CAP, Right on Crime, Faith and Freedom Coalition, etc.) – bringing bipartisan credibility, resources.
- CLS – technical expertise, state knowledge.



# Lead Sponsors in PA

- Sen. Scott Wagner (R-York)(gubernatorial candidate)
- Sen. Anthony Williams (D-Phila.)
- Rep. Sheryl DeLozier (R-Cumberland)
- Rep. Jordan Harris (D-Phila.)
- Dozens of co-sponsors from both parties in both chambers, as well as the Governor.



# Supporters Have Been Unusual Bedfellows

- Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, who served in Admin. of both parties.
- State and local Chambers of Commerce.
- City of Philadelphia.
- Editorials from Reading and York newspapers.
- Op-eds from Pittsburgh DA and Uber.



# Supporters, Continued

- Philadelphia Eagles players, lead by Malcolm Jenkins

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ggpxz2rf80pb1zj/Clean Slate Final Master MP4.mp4?dl=0>



# Replicating Clean Slate in Other States

- W.K. Kellogg Foundation: funding educational campaigns in Michigan, Colorado and South Carolina.
- Similar campaigns under consideration in other states.
- Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.) has announced a federal Clean Slate bill.



# Resources

- Clean Slate toolkit: <http://bit.ly/2GyrjeF>
- Advice from CLS and CAP



# For More Information

Contact CLS:

- Sharon Dietrich ([sdietrich@clsphila.org](mailto:sdietrich@clsphila.org))
- Michael Hollander  
([mhollander@clsphila.org](mailto:mhollander@clsphila.org))
- Jamie Gullen ([jgullen@clsphila.org](mailto:jgullen@clsphila.org))

Tel: 215-981-3700





# Questions?

Email: [cleanslate@csgjusticecenter.org](mailto:cleanslate@csgjusticecenter.org)

Sign up to receive newsletters and other announcements at  
[cleanslateclearinghouse.org](http://cleanslateclearinghouse.org)

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