**A *Clean Slate* for Colorado**

**HB19-XXXX Sponsored by Representative Mike Weissman**

**What is Clean Slate?**

“Clean Slate” is legislation that provides for automatically sealing certain criminal records so that they are not available to the public, but can still be accessed by law enforcement, family courts, and victims of crimes.

Under Clean Slate, the following are automatically sealed when people have remained free of misdemeanor and felony convictions for a specified period of time:

* Charges that did not result in a conviction, after 63 days;
* Non-violent drug-related misdemeanor convictions, after 7 years;
* Level 4 drug-related felonies, after 10 years.

The offenses that are included in this legislation are already eligible for sealing under Colorado law, but currently require a court petition, filing fees, and other cumbersome steps in order to be processed.

**Why is Clean Slate needed in Colorado?**

There are more than 1.8 million Coloradans listed on the state criminal record database. For many of these people, involvement with the justice system has led to perpetual unemployment, housing insecurity, and the loss of income for themselves and their families.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Clean Slate legislation will provide many benefits to Coloradans, including:

* ***Employment and Housing:*** By removing barriers to employment and housing, this bill will give people a chance to move on with their lives and become more productive citizens.
* ***Community Safety***: Research has established that if an offender does not commit another offense within three years of their previous conviction, they are unlikely to offend in the future. Research also shows that policies that reduce economic obstacles for people with criminal histories are effective at lowering recidivism and strengthening public safety.
* ***Public Administration:*** By lowering the number of individual sealing petitions, Clean Slate legislation will help Coloradans utilize the opportunity for record sealing that is currently available, allowing Colorado’s court system to operate more efficiently and at a lower cost to taxpayers.
* ***Family Security:*** Experts estimate that half of the children in the U.S. have at least one parent with a criminal record. In Colorado, an estimated 60,000 children have experienced the incarceration of a parent. This bill would expand economic opportunities to the families and children of justice-involved residents.

**Support for Clean Slate**

Above Waters Project

Center for Employment Opportunities

City Unite

Colorado African American Drug Policy Coalition

Colorado Catholic Conference

Colorado Center on Law and Policy

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

Colorado Cross Disability Coalition

Colorado Lawyers Committee

Colorado Poverty Law Project

CWEE

Empowercom, Inc.

Focus Reentry

Good Business Colorado

Interfaith Alliance of Colorado

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-- Colorado

Metro Caring

Orchid Mental Health Legal Advocacy of Colorado, Inc.

Remerg

Small Business Majority

Urban Colors Arts and Mentoring

1. Michele Natividad Rodriguez and Maurice Emsellem, *65 Million ‘Need Not Apply’: The Case for Reforming Criminal Background Checks for Employment*. The National Employment Law Project, March 2011, <http://www.nelp.org/page/-/SCLP/2011/65_Million_Need_Not_Apply.pdf?nocdn=1> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)