

My name is Alba Atrian, and I am a paralegal currently working for the Clear Clinic, we provide free services to the community such as DACA renewals, name and gender marker changes, eviction expungements, legal advice, and criminal record expungements.

Last year in the span of four months we provided aid to close to 300 people who were seeking help in clearing their record, due to COVID-19 we were not able to hold in person events which would have provided free fingerprinting and document notarizing.

To be honest I had no idea that having your record expunged was an option let alone the amount of time and money that goes into trying to clear your record. The cost out of pocket is ridiculous, something that takes me 20 min to do can cost someone hundreds of dollars which becomes the first hurdle in getting their life back on track.

Time is another factor that makes getting records expunged difficult. Going down to the courthouse to file the paperwork, getting fingerprints taken and in some cases having paperwork notarized can financially impact someone when they must take a day off work to get these things done.

How can we better the record expungement process to not solely benefit the attorneys or courthouse financially but better serve those who have already paid their dues but are now branded with the scarlet letter of a bad record. We cannot expect people who are unable to find jobs because of their record to be able to afford the price to have their record cleaned, it is a vicious cycle that Prevents people from getting a job, housing, and denies them the right to provide for their family.

Currently there are approximately 1.5 million Oregonians living with a criminal record. the current system is outdated, we need a system that is consistent throughout all of Oregon that can simplify the expungement process. "This has always seemed like an impossibility to me", this is a quote from one of the participants of the Clear Clinic who expressed both his frustration of not being able to clean his record for years because he did not know how to go about it and his excitement of finally being free of the record that had made it impossible for him to get the job he wanted.

For someone who has never had to go through the challenges of record expungement or had to suffer the shame of feeling less than because of a bad decision that was made in the past this bill might not seem like a big deal but for the millions of people who are denied opportunities and feel the frustration and helplessness of not being able have a clear path to expungement this bill has significant value. everybody deserves the chance to succeed.