

Date: February 23, 2021
To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
From: Sarah Hoyt, Clean Slate Oregon Coalition
RE: Support for Clean Slate Oregon, SB 397

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here this morning.

My name is Sarah Hoyt. I live in Grants Pass. I am here today speaking in support of SB 397.

I lost my license after getting 3 DUI's and received a permanent felony in 2014 at the age of 23, I am now 31.

This has impacted my life significantly over the past years; this legislation is important to me because I am unable to move forward with finding a job that I can turn into a career. I have been very grateful to work for a company that doesn't judge my ability to work for them on my felony. I have been told that a DUI felony will never be eligible to be expunged off my record, no matter how many years that pass. My license has been revoked for life, but I can petition after 10 years. At the time, I was working multiple jobs and ended up going to jail for 90 days, but was able to get out early for good behavior. When I was released, I was able to get one of my jobs back ,but lost the other. I have not been in any trouble since then.

At the age of 13, I was arrested for the first time for theft from a local market. I went to school and the cops were there to arrest me and the other people I was with at the time. I had to spend four weekends in a juvenile detention center, while attending school during the week.

Today, I deal with daily anxiety and depression because I am unable to do the most simple things in life, such as drive myself to work, grocery shop, go to doctor appointments and visit with family who live miles away. I must rely on help from my boyfriend and family when I need a ride. I've been very grateful to get a ride from a coworker to work everyday. Since Covid I have been working from home which is a huge relief.

I have accepted the fact that this felony may follow me for the rest of my life unless we can make a change and help people who have made mistakes at an early age and have learned since then. I want to be able to change jobs and challenge myself to be successful in a career that I enjoy. Most jobs require a driver's license and a background check and because of my history I am denied those jobs.

My conviction does not define me, I was very young at the time and recently moved back from Los Angeles, California where I had finished nursing school at Los Angeles Job Corps. I had also completed my GED and took multiple administration classes. Unfortunately, living down there

on my own was very hard and I found myself using drugs and spiraling down hill with the wrong crowd. I made the right choice to come back home to Grants Pass. My CNA license was unable to be transferred and I would have to go back to school, but I didn't have the money to do so. I have learned from my mistakes and have not been in trouble since then. I worked multiple jobs and paid off my fines and completed all the required classes and counseling and was able to get off probation early.

I don't want to continue to be unable to follow my dreams. I made a choice at a young age when I lost my license that I would not have kids. If I am unable to drive myself to and from work, how am I able to take care of a child. My boyfriend and I have been together 9 years in March, 2021. He has helped me in so many ways, but my self esteem is low and I am embarrassed of my past. I am a strong woman who refuses to give up on hope and I will fight until I can become the best version of myself. I have a home I live in and money to pay my bills and am grateful to be able to afford to buy essential items.

I believe society views my consequences as what I deserve because of my actions, as do I. I take full responsibility for what I have done, but that doesn't define who I am now and how I have changed and grown from those mistakes in more ways than one. I can only hope society can see that in me, as I do in myself. It's getting closer in time for me to petition for my license and if I am able to get that back then the next battle will be having the felony expunged so I can keep moving forward in life.

If SB 397 were passed, I would have an opportunity to start again and do things differently. I am ready for a clean slate, so I can show my community and myself what I'm truly capable of. Therefore, I urge you to pass SB 397.

Sincerely,
Sarah Hoyt