

Date: 2/23/2021

RE: Support SB 397 – Clean Slate Initiative

Central City Concern (CCC) is a non-profit direct service organization that provides integrated primary and behavioral health care, supportive and affordable housing, and employment services to people impacted by homelessness in the Tri-County area. Central City Concern operates about 2,100 units of affordable housing, serves 9,000 patients annually through our 12 Federally Qualified Health Centers, makes 1,200 job placements annually and operates social services for the community justice programs in Multnomah and Clackamas counties. **Our programs and properties span Senate Districts 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25; and House Districts 33, 36, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 and 50**

Passage of SB 397 will have a positive impact on our dedicated workforce and the people we serve. Approximately 45% of our employees identify as being in recovery and 25% of those employees were once clients, patients and/or residents of Central City Concern services and housing. There is no substitution for the expertise that comes with lived experience. The benefits of making expungement possible may never be able to be quantified, because they will be too vast, touching so many lives and impacting different parts of our communities.

Below you will see comments from our staff, talking about themselves and their clients, patients and residents; speaking to the opportunities they have been given, those they have missed out on and the chance some have not even bothered to take because of continual fear of rejection. An accessible expungement process means:

- More and better job opportunities to alleviate poverty
- Increased housing stability and housing choice – less risk of homelessness
- Willingness to go back to school because doors will actually open rather than continue to stay closed
- Reconnecting with family and community, improved self-confidence and greater value of self and community – which is key to maintaining long-term recovery

Comments of impact and necessity from our frontline and support staff:

“I am in the process of having my record expunged and it is very expensive and timely. I had to wait 10 years with nothing in between. I have also applied for jobs and been denied based on my record. People make mistakes, pay for their mistakes and then continue to pay for them unless they can get their record expunged.” *Angela Cannada, Golden West / Supportive Transitions and Stabilization, Supervisor*

“Without access to expungement, I likely would not be where I am today - I would either be stuck in place or spiraling downward instead of having opportunities to grow and give back. But my parents helped me immensely with the process, and without their help I doubt I would have been able to access it. I don't believe it's right for access to this process to depend entirely on how much money and knowledge of the system someone has. This bill will increase access to the opportunity to



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bounce back for many people who would not be able to afford it but otherwise qualify and deserve to have their lives and goals back.” *Jonathan Lari, Old Town Clinic, Health Screener*

“It is now 2021 where last year a new law was passed in Oregon, if you got caught for personal possession of drugs you will just get a citation. I was a little upset by this because, I received 5 felonies for (starting back in 1999) were something that is now no longer illegal. I've not been in trouble in over 11 years. I know I made a lot of mistakes, not so much with the judicial system I feel, but more to the people who love me. And after coming this far and I'm happy to say all my family forgives me, so why can't the courts. I'm clean now. I made a few mistakes I was never skilled at hiding what I did. I just want a little of my life back. It's been 11 yrs. I think I proved and paid enough for what I did. Look at what I've accomplished.” *April White Elk, Central Building Assistance*

“Fully support this initiative. I was one who years ago filed for expungements and it was a long drawn-out expensive ordeal and I didn't pursue which caused missed opportunities in the workforce” *Gary Butler, Resident Service Coordinator*

“I have an accounting degree, but I had 7 felonies from my addiction. It was incredibly hard to find a job who would give me a chance. I was offered many positions and had job offers taken back due to my criminal history. My criminal history and addiction also rested on the fact that I was homeless. Finding housing with felonies even if you have turned your life around is instantly denied. I was never given a fair shot to prove myself as the best candidate for housing or jobs.” *Amanda Tesi, Administration Purchasing, Purchasing Assistant*

“My own life will undergo a wonderful paradigm should this bill become law. I have 6 or 8 simple drug possession felonies, NONE of which would even be misdemeanors, but only non-criminal violations, were I caught in the situations today. We are learning and progressing a great deal, as a society. Please don't abandon me, and others like me, in the gutters of historical ignorance. I have over 3 years sober, and counting, work full time for CCC, and contribute to the world around me wherever I am afforded the opportunity to do so. Please remove the scarlet letter "felon" from my social portrait.” *Ian Austin, Golden West/STS, Assistant Case Manager*

“I myself am a felon and I am not able to clear my record due the class of my crimes but I would like to see other people be able to clear their record and not be denied for an apartment or a job due to their criminal record. It takes a big toll on someone's life and it could be so stressful that they resort back to their old ways. People with criminal backgrounds need help and need not be thrown to the sidelines to struggle. That person with a record could have great job skills or a degree.” *Erica Jahner, FAN Housing, Lead CBA*

“I personally know what it is like to carry the stigma of a past conviction like a scarlet letter, despite having completely changed my life many years ago. CCC's commitment to employing and supporting individuals with criminal backgrounds is a huge reason I feel passionately about working for this organization. How are individuals supposed to grow and heal and find success, if their past is going to prohibit them from getting a home and job, two of the most basic pillars to stable foundation?” *Hunter Hartzell, Admin, Insurance Specialist*

“This happened to me, and I was homeless for many years as the barrier of my background kept me from working or renting. It created a problem that did not have to exist. I was willing to work and pay



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rent and had paid my debit to society.” Susan Sehm, Bud Clark Commons Management, Mental Health Counselor

“I have been at CCC for 18 months and we are a second chance employer. I have met the most amazing, hard-working and principled people that were given a second chance. And the power of forgiveness and support for these individuals more than outweighs long standing thinking about “paying your dues to society”! Let’s start managing public policy around these issues to the goodness of people and not the exceptions of those that may never change.” *Oscar Cardona, Chief People Officer*

“Everyone deserves to be forgiven and to show that they can change for the better. We do not need to judge them by the past, but by who they are today and what they will rise up to be in the future.” *Audrey Knowles, Old Town Clinic, Primary Care, Certified Medical Assistant*

“I have known many clients and employees in my years at CCC whose past criminal justice system involvement created major barriers to success. For the people I know, they committed crimes while in their addiction, and they paid for their offenses through incarceration, fines, etc. In recovery, they have put that part of their life behind them; however, without a reasonably rapid and accessible way to expunge old offenses, often they cannot achieve their goals. I have especially seen the impacts of people whose life experiences make them highly qualified to work as a counselor/mentor to people struggling with addiction, homelessness, mental illness, etc., and who worked hard to complete the required education and training for these roles, only to have their past justice system involvement crush their dreams. In a just society, everyone should have the opportunity to make amends for their mistakes and not have those mistakes hang over them forever.” *E.V. Armitage, Administration, Executive Coordinator*

“Everyone deserves a chance no matter what, life on life’s terms I understand, but if someone is whole heartedly changed for the better, something as a charge that was just a hiccup in the road should not stop them from succeeding in life,” *Stephanie, GPD Program, Peer Support Specialist*

“Having a criminal record early on in life, especially with less serious charges that are still felonies, can change the course of your life by limiting opportunities and receiving harsh and typically unwarranted judgement by others; being made to feel like a lesser member of society and bringing down overall self-worth and lowering ambition.” *Aaron Causey, Social Enterprises/Employment Access Center, Employment Specialist*

“I am so glad to see this. It is extremely hard for those wanting to change the course of their lives and have made poor choices in the past to move forward with employment and housing. I am 100% behind this piece of legislation.” *Judy Hickey, Blackburn, Intake Specialist/Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor*

“Cheers to giving people a second chance.” *Janice Biernacke, Old Town Clinic Summit Team, Clinical Pharmacist*

“I have worked with several people who spent their entire adult lives in prison after committing a crime when they were mentally ill and 17 or 18 years old. These clients spent their lives stigmatized by a mistake they made and did their time for with no opportunity to move on as this charge remains over their heads, on their records and a constant reminder that they are treated as less than citizens.



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They deserve to be able to start over with a more achievable means of expungement.” *Rebecca Wood, OTRC/ICM, Mental Health & Addictions Counselor*

“I believe positive change is possible for all, with the right tools and environment to provide these changes. Let's work together to provoke education, reformation, and hope for those who want another chance in life to be productive citizens. Thank you.” *Sheri Hamilton, The Imani Center, Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP)*

“I have personally seen how having a criminal record can impact an individual for life. Five years after being released from prison my friend needed to find a new housing situation and reached out for help. It took many, many months and just as many rejections before we could find suitable housing for him. He had a well-paying job, good credit and rental history but had a felony conviction that stopped him from being approved almost everywhere he tried. Eventually we found a place and he has been in his own apartment for almost three years now. He is reluctant to look for a better spot because he knows that even though he has rental history he will still find it difficult to find someone willing to rent to him.” *Samantha Contoise, BBIS, Business Analyst*

“[The current system] It is archaic and outdated.” *Barbara Morrison, Supportive Housing / 8x8 and ERP, Housing Specialist*

(Theft one, fire arms, DUII'S) Holds me back from seeing and finding my daughter in Canada, can't cross the border. Better job opportunities [are possible if SB397 passes]. *Cheryl Lynn Morgan, Hill Park Apartments, Community Building Assistant*

“Better opportunity for employment [are possible if SB397 passes]” *Wyman Macon, Hooper, Sub-Tech*

“My sister has been unable to get gainful employment or even a decent place to live due to having a "possession" charge on her record from a charge that occurred when she was in her addiction. This [expungement] process needs to be changed.” *Ryan Galle, Hooper DSC, Patient Care Coordinator*

“People deserve second chances and should not have to wait 10 plus years to get them.” *Aaron Lehl, Housing, Community Building Assistant*

“Please help those of us who have made mistakes in the past but have taken responsibility for their actions and are moving forward with their lives.” *Rob Gabrish, Estate, Resident Services*

“We all make mistakes and a lot of us learn from them and would like the opportunity to start a clean and fresh start in life.” *Shari Olsen Recovery, Sanitization/CBA*

“When anyone anywhere reaches out for help, we must care.” *Barber Baker, Letty Owings Center, Administrative Intake Coordinator*

CCC staff co-signers in support of SB 397:

Veronica St John, *BBIS, Billing and Business Operations Manager*

Malinda Brown, *Old Town Recovery Center, Behavioral Health Assistant*

Maggie Podesta, *Old Town Recovery Center/IPS Employment Program, Employment Specialist II*



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Kayla Carlson, *Quality Management, Population health Coordinator*
Stephanie, *GPD program, Peer support specialist*
Brian Slack, *Blackburn Center, Lead Environmental Services Specialist*
NatashaLei Nichols, *STP, Assistant Case Manager*
Savannah Pozarycki, *Old Town Recovery Center, Pharmacy Technician*
Susan Marie, *Old Town Recovery Center, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner*
Arsalan Shah, *Old Town Clinic Pharmacy, Interim Director of Pharmacy*
Daniel Epting, *Blackburn SUDS, Peer Support Specialist*
Wayne Haddad, *IT, CIO*
Angela Cannada, *Golden West / Supportive Transitions and Stabilization, Supervisor*
Barbara Morrison, *Supportive Housing / 8x8 and ERP, Housing Specialist*
Kira Hoerner, *Housing Rapid Response, Housing Specialist*
Abigail Graber, *Supportive Housing, Family Mentor*
Oscar Cardona, *Administration, Chief People Officer*
Chase Bissett, *Project Management Office, Project Manager*
Ryan Galle, *Hooper DSC, Patient Care Coordinator*
KayLynn Gesner, *Hep C, Health Screening and Linkage to Care Specialists*
Gabriel Hernandez, *HCV Team, Health Screening and Linkage to Care Specialist*
Santos Perez, *Charlotte B. Rutherford / Supportive Housing, Resident Services Coordinator*
Cherilyn Kowalski, *Richard Harris Building/ PTP, Case Manager*
Barber Baker, *Letty Owings Center, Administrative Intake Coordinator*
Brennan Edwards, *Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD), Case Manager II*
AJ Rohn, *Supportive Housing, Data Technician*
Erica Jahner, *FAN Housing, Lead CBA*
Tammy Hendon, *Chez Ami (Permanent Supportive Housing), Case Manager*
Rachel Hunter, *Admin - Decision Support, Software Developer*
Andrew Fraser, *Old Town Clinic/Primary Care, Physician Assistant/Primary Care Provider*
Tomecka Hill, *Ankeny/Harris, Resident Service Coordinator*
Margot Presley, *Blackburn, Primary Care Provider*
Trent Gay, *Employment Access Center, Lead Career Coach*
Andrew Seaman, MD, *Hepatitis C Elimination Program, Clinical Lead, Assistant Professor*
Jennifer Head, *Old Town Clinic, Summit Team, Care Coordinator, Medical Assistant*
Brinn Culver, *Old Town Clinic Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner*
Cindy Ross, *Puentes, Office Manager*
Brianna Sustersic, *Old Town Clinic, Senior Medical Director of Primary Care*
Matt Hisel, *Administration, Grants Manager*
Margarita Herzberg, *Blackburn Center, Medical Records*
Christopher Lewis, *Old Town Clinic, Medical Assistant*
Kyra Spengler, *Letty Owing Center, Treatment Assistant*
Patricia Nealeigh, *Hooper Detox, Medical records*
Kaeli Graffuis, *Old Town Recovery Center, Mental Health Counselor*
Amanda Scott, *Old Town Recovery Center, Registered Nurse*
Tori Smith, *Imani Center, Clinical Supervisor*
Shari Olsen, *Central City Concern Recovery, Sanitization/CBA*
Anthony Traver, *Bud Clark Clinic, Clinical Supervisor*
Michael Leslie, *Pharmacy, Purchaser*
Jaclyn Bell, *Letty Owings Center Women's Treatment Center, Treatment Assistant*
Audrey Knowles, *Old Town Clinic, Primary Care, Certified Medical Assistant*

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Andrea Poole, *Blackburn Center, Registered nurse*
Sheri Hamilton, *The Imani Center, Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP)*
Gary Butler, *Resident service coordinator*
Ron Snyder, *CMT Community Maintenance Team, Maintenance*
Jacquelyn Hunt, *Administration, Chief Integration & Innovation Officer*
Ashley Hall, *Blackburn Building/Recovery, On-Call/Janitorial*
Emily Kahnert, *Hooper Detox, Subacute Technician*
Rob Gabrish, *Estate, Resident Services*
April White Elk, *Central City Program, CBA Central Building Assistant*
Briana Stodola, *Old Town Recovery Center, Senior Project Manager*
Donna Standing Rock, *Old Town Recovery Center, Case Manager*
Judy Hickey, *Blackburn, Intake Specialist/Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor*
Kelly Smith, *Old Town Recovery Center, Mental Health Counselor QMHP*
Janice Biernacke, *Old Town Clinic Summit Team, Clinical Pharmacist*
Rebecca Wood, *Old Town Recovery Center/ICM, Mental Health & Addictions Counselor*
Amy Beaver, *CCC Recovery Center, SUDs CADC II, QMHA*
Mandi Houston, *Human Resource, Recruiter*
Jonathan Lari, *Old Town Clinic, Health Screener*
Hunter Hartzell, *Admin, Insurance Specialist*
Gregory Ouellette, *Old Town Clinic, COVID Health Screener*
Amanda Tesi, *Administration Purchasing, Purchasing Assistant*
Christina Schermerhorn, *Health Services - Client Access, Health Information Manager*
Cheryl Lynn Morgan, *Hill Park Apartments, Community Building Assistant*
Samantha Contoise, *BBIS, Business Analyst*
Susan Sehm, *Bud Clark Commons Management, Mental Health Counselor*
Chet Christopher, *Madrona Recovery Mentor Program, Mentor*
Wyman Macon, *Hooper Detoxification Center, Sub-Tech*
Lisa Newport, *Bud Clark Case Management, Peer Wellness Case Manager*
Aaron Causey, *Social Enterprises/Employment Access Center, Employment Specialist*
Greggory Dallas, *Public Affairs, Interim Community Engagement Manager*
Aaron Lehl, *Housing, Community Building Assistant*
E.V. Armitage, *Administration, Executive Coordinator*
Ryan, *Old Town Recovery Center CORE 2 ACT Team, Community Mental Health Counselor*
Ian Austin, *Golden West/STS, Assistant Case Manager*
Clarice Jordan, *Letty Owings Center, Treatment Assistant*
Julie Kappel, *Letty Owings Center, Treatment Assistant*