

Community Law

METROPOLITAN PUBLIC DEFENDER

TO: Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee
RE: SB 519 / March 2, 2023 hearing
DATE: February 23, 2023

My name is Leslie Nelson, I am a managing attorney for the Collateral Consequence Program in Metropolitan Public Defender – Community Law Division. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of SB 519.

Prior to working with the Community Law Division, I worked with our Parent Child Advocacy Division for eighteen years, where I represented Youth in hundreds of Juvenile Delinquency matters, in addition to working with parents and children involved in the child welfare system.

Our Community Law Division works on diminishing the downstream effects of criminal justice involvement with record clearing services including expungement, felony reduction, reducing court fines and fees and driver's license reinstatement.

Given the background and expertise of my office, I write to strongly support SB 519. We believe Youth who have contact with the juvenile justice system should have the opportunity to become positive members of our community, to access education and vocational programs, to obtain employment that provides a livable wage, secure safe and stable housing and be free from the stigma of a juvenile record that no longer defines them.

Juvenile records have far-reaching collateral consequences that impact a Youth's future. These records can hinder access to housing, jobs, school enrollment, college applications, and professional licensure.

Oregon's juvenile justice system goal is rehabilitation and reformation for Youth. A Youth who successfully participates in the accountability and rehabilitative opportunities grows to become a productive and contributing member of our community. Expunction is an important step in the process for Youth who have successfully completed probation.

Navigating the current expunction process is not an easy task for anyone without legal expertise. Firms, such as ours and others assist with filing expunction petitions, however even getting connected to appropriate services can be difficult and can make pursuing expunction prohibitive. SB 519 would make it easier for some Youth to navigate the expunction system.

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I would be happy to provide any additional information the Committee would find helpful. Thank you again for allowing me to testify. I urge you to pass SB 519.

Sincerely,

Leslie Nelson

Managing Attorney

Community Law Division

Metropolitan Public Defender

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