



PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFETY & JUSTICE

Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee
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Testimony in Support of SB 397
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Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

At Partnership for Safety & Justice, we advocate for public safety and criminal justice policies that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both. For over 20 years, our work has promoted public safety with policies that keep families together, reduce racial disparities, and invest in communities across Oregon.

Partnership for Safety and Justice supports the passage of Senate Bill 397. SB 397 would reform the clearance process for eligible convictions, ensuring equitable access to second chances.

Oregonians want a criminal justice system that ensures equity, accountability, and healing. We believe that people who have caused harm should be responsible for that harm, after which they should have an opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Yet the state's record clearance law creates inequity, harms our economy, and limits opportunity. The current process for expungement creates barriers to housing, education, jobs, and training. Such challenges increase the likelihood that a family will lack the resources they need to thrive, and they perpetuate cycles of generational trauma and poverty.

When our loved ones, friends, neighbors, and community members are barred from fully participating in society and our economy, we all lose out.

We are calling for urgent action to transform our expungement process to address this huge oversight of justice within the criminal justice system. People who are eligible and have successfully completed their sentences should have their records expunged. SB 397 proposes simple, meaningful changes that would mitigate decades of disproportionate over-criminalization of people of color and bring much needed relief to impacted Oregonians.

It is time to work toward a vision of equitable second chances that is built on accountability, compassion, and opportunity. With SB 397, we can eliminate unnecessary barriers and encourage successful re-entry back into our communities.

Partnership for Safety and Justice urges your aye vote for SB 397.