

Chairs Lieber and Kropf, members of the Joint Interim Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response,

I am an attorney with the PCC Legal Resource Center and I provide expungement services for people who want to clear their criminal records. In my work, I see the "tail end" of policing and criminal prosecution, ranging from dismissed arrests to incarceration, as well as probation. I have come to believe that every arrest is a trauma, and that each arrest can compound the barriers that keep people from making positive changes in their lives.

For every person with substance use disorder or mental health issues who is told that getting arrested, or being forced into treatment, is the path to recovery, there are many more who are damaged by the process of arrest and prosecution, as the research shows. It simply does not work, nor does coercive treatment. And it leaves people with criminal records that are still difficult to clear, even when they are cases which are dismissed. At the Resource Center we have done more than 5,000 expungements in the last two years and strongly oppose any effort to re-criminalize activity which could and should be dealt with by public health interventions. Please have the courage to push back against the hysteria that characterizes the campaign to re-criminalize drug possession.

Sincerely,  
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