



**Submitted to the Senate Committee on  
Thursday, March 2, 2023**

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 697/698  
By Babak Zolfaghari-Azar, Senior Policy Manager, Partnership for Safety and Justice**

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 strongly supports Senate Bill 697 and Senate Bill 698, which in tandem streamline the existing process for record clearance and establishes the technological infrastructure to automate expungements for eligible records. A criminal record is a major barrier to community members rebuilding their lives and significantly impacts people from having an opportunity to access housing and employment. A fresh start for community members who are living crime free lives is common sense policy and in the best interest of every Oregonian. We can all agree that stable people and families leads to healthier, safer communities. The automation of the process and the technical fixes proposed will alleviate barriers within the process of expungement that are time consuming, exclusionary, and expensive. More people will have their records cleared, improving our economy, safety in our communities, and the overall success of families.

The stigma of a record and the power of exclusion in social and civic life a record holds over a person are additional barriers to people being able to rebuild their lives. It's well documented how these negative consequences disproportionately impact the lives of people of color in Oregon. Having a fair opportunity to engage in society after being accountable for actions that led to incarceration or probation can only help, not harm, community. There is far too much harm done by a criminal record and all the hoops a person has to jump through to get it cleared and off their record. Senate Bill 697 and 698 are truly a step in the right direction for folks to have a clean slate and fresh start to their lives.

For the reasons outlined above, Partnership for Safety and Justice supports Senate Bill 697 and 698. Thank you for your careful consideration of this important legislation.