

Submitter: Naomi Lezpona  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: HB4097

My name is Naomi Lezpona. I started volunteering at the expungement clinic in April 2022. I have seen many people who have worked hard at changing their lives come into the clinic and are in desperate need of getting a reprieve from their fines and fees. Most of the individuals are hardworking, tax-paying individuals who, at times, simply cannot pay the fines/fees because they need necessities like food and housing. As a community, we should offer a way for people to get a complete second chance, not a half chance. Imposing fines and fees on individuals for past behavior, who have been productive members of the community, doesn't support the idea of a second chance. If, as a community, we want to support and offer second chances, we should do it entirely with fines/fee forgiveness.

These fines prevent the expungement of crimes that would be otherwise eligible. Someone lucky enough to pay fines/fees will be allowed a complete second chance at housing, job opportunities, and other necessities of life. Those who are not as lucky to have extra money outside of necessities and are unable to pay those fines/fees are being further suppressed by systems. They are being told that they could have a second chance, yet we, as a community, won't give it to them because of money. Access to money is a privilege that many people don't have. The community should forgive these fines/fees for individuals who need access to housing, better jobs, and care for their families.

Further, this bill will help individuals in getting their records expunged in a more timely manner. People need to get these charges expunged because they need housing and better work opportunities. They need timeliness so they can move on with their lives.

I also support this bill because it will reach more individuals and give low-income individuals access to expungements for their chance at a second chance.

For those reasons, I support HB4097

Naomi Lezpona