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Oregon Legislature Passes Juvenile Expungement Reform (SB 575), Bill Heads to Governor's Desk

SALEM, OR (6/28/21) — On June 26th, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 575, the juvenile expungement reform bill. The bill, supported by a coalition of juvenile justice advocates and agencies, is headed to Governor Brown's desk for signature.

"Getting one's record cleared is an important component of successful reentry and a second chance. If they are not able to have their records cleared, juveniles face a number of collateral consequences later in life. It can keep them from getting a job, housing, occupational license, entering the military, and even entry into college," says Senator Michael Dembrow, Chief Sponsor. "Yet, only 4% of eligible youth successfully apply for and make it through the system each year. SB 575 is long-overdue step toward simplifying and modifying the expunction process."

In Oregon, when youth have contact with law enforcement or the juvenile court, paper and electronic records are created. Information in these records is publicly available. Juvenile court records are treated the same as adult criminal court records for most collateral consequences, creating barriers that keep youth becoming successful adults.

SB 575 will automatically clear the records of over 5000 youth each year who have records created due to contact with law enforcement but were not convicted in juvenile court. And, for those youth who have been convicted in juvenile court and later rehabilitated, it provides early access to court appointed attorneys to assist with clearing their records.

This bill is the first step to reforming our juvenile expunction law. The national  Juvenile Law Center found Oregon's law to be more oppressive than the national average on three factors: timing of expungement, availability of expungement based on the offense, and access to automatic expungement.

According to Lisa Kay Williams, Supervising Attorney at Youth, Rights & Justice, "Youth who have successfully participated in accountability and rehabilitative programs offered in juvenile justice systems should have the opportunity to be productive community members. Expunction plays an important part in that opportunity."

If signed by Governor Brown, the bill takes effect 91 days after adjournment sine die.

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To learn more about how juvenile records limit success and what Youth, Rights & Justice is doing to help, check out this [video](#).

