

**Testimony Supporting
S.B. 366: An Act Concerning the Erasure of Records in Delinquency and Family with
Service Needs Matters**

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Judiciary Committee
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Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and distinguished members of the committee:

We are testifying today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families.

Connecticut Voices for Children supports S.B. 366, which requires the automatic erasure of all juvenile offenders' court records after two years in cases where the juvenile was convicted for the commission of a delinquent act. S.B. 366 ensures that the rehabilitative function of the juvenile justice system is not undermined by the stigma of an unnecessary criminal record.

Connecticut already erases the records of juveniles convicted for the commission of a delinquent act after two years when the convicted individual submits a request to have his or her record wiped.¹ These requests are nearly always granted.² However, because many former delinquents are unaware that they can have their records wiped, they often do not apply.³ This creates socioeconomic disparities between those juvenile offenders who do and do not have their records erased, disparities that arise irrespective of the nature of the crime committed, or the extent to which the former offender has managed to get his or her life back on-track.⁴

Allowing juvenile court records to be erased is an important part of the rehabilitative function of the juvenile court. A history of delinquency carries a stigma that can force former juvenile offenders to face discrimination, and can drive them back to a life of crime. The proposed statutory change would only allow for the erasure of records for individuals who have gone two years without any additional convictions. These young men and women who have successfully avoided further criminal activity should not be hindered in their rehabilitation because of an unnecessary stigma they are left with merely because they did not overcome a procedural hurdle. Automatically erasing the records of all former juvenile offenders convicted of a delinquent act will help to ensure that all youth can benefit equally from the rehabilitative function of the juvenile court.

¹ See, CGS 46b-146.

² See, e-mail from Abby Anderson, Executive Director of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance, February 18th.

³ See, e-mail from Abby Anderson, Executive Director of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance, February 18th.

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