

I forgot to tell the committee that I would not be able to be here this afternoon. I did not have a lot to say about the expungement report. If you can let the committee know that our office most closely agrees with the testimony of Vermont Legal Aid. Expungement is an important factor in the long-term success of people exiting the criminal justice system. Expungement is a challenge for many of our clients because there is no automatic process for initiating an expungement, expungement can be costly, the rules are confusing, and there is no appointment of representation for an expungement petition. Also, by the time many people are eligible for expungement, the damage caused by a criminal record has been done - people who have a record that prevents them from finding employment cannot undue the effects of years of poverty, dependance, and risk just because they are ultimately able to expunge their record.

So we support anything that removes the barriers to speedy, effective, efficient expungement of criminal records.

Thank you, and sorry that I was unable to testify this afternoon.

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