



S. 7 Draft 2.3 – Expungement and Sealing
Sarah Robinson, Deputy Director
House Judiciary Committee- May 11, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the latest draft of S. 7. We support draft 2.3.

The Vermont Network is supportive of Vermont’s efforts to expand expungement eligibility in recent years. We recognize the barriers that criminal records pose for many individuals in Vermont - including justice-involved victims of domestic and sexual violence. Expungements can provide a path to more stable housing, employment and financial opportunities – which not only benefit these individuals, but can strengthen our communities as a whole.

The Network also recognizes the long-term, and sometimes lifetime, impacts of crime on victims. We appreciate the Legislature’s commitment to considering the rights and voice of victims in policy changes related to expungement. We are supportive of the language in Section 8 of the draft which tasks the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee with examining qualifying misdemeanors and considering whether those that are related to domestic and sexual violence out to be excluded.

It is extremely common for certain domestic and sexual violence related charges to result in various misdemeanor convictions. For example, domestic assault charges are commonly pled down to simple assault or disorderly conduct charges. In the context of domestic violence, there can be an especially important function that criminal history serves in identifying patterns of behavior and an overall course of conduct over time. We believe that these issues require additional consideration and are more than willing to serve as a resource for the Joint Justice Oversight Committee in the coming year as they discuss these issues.

Thank you for your consideration.