



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Governor's Press Office, [ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov](mailto:ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov)

## **Governor Shapiro Hosts Legislative Leaders and Reform Advocates for Ceremonial Bill Signing of Clean Slate Legislation, Giving More Pennsylvanians a Second Chance at Success**

*The Shapiro-Davis Administration has been working to give Pennsylvanians the second chances they deserve – signing comprehensive probation reform legislation into law, securing historic funding for indigent defense, and more.*

*The Governor and Lieutenant Governor joined legislative leaders and reform advocates today for a ceremonial signing of Clean Slate legislation on the day this updated law takes effect to help ensure Pennsylvanians who receive a pardon will get their criminal records expunged automatically.*



**Harrisburg, PA** – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** hosted a ceremonial bill signing with **Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis**, **Majority Appropriations Chairman Jordan Harris**, members of the General Assembly, and criminal justice reform advocates to celebrate the Clean Slate legislation that passed with bipartisan support and was signed by the Governor to make our Commonwealth more fair for all Pennsylvanians.

Last year, Governor Shapiro [signed](#) overdue criminal justice reform legislation into law as Act 36 of 2023. This legislation expands Pennsylvania’s landmark Clean Slate initiative and establishes a process for the automatic expungement of criminal records for Pennsylvanians who receive an unconditional pardon. Today, this updated law takes effect, ensuring more people can begin to get the second chances they deserve.

“A minor conviction from years ago shouldn’t prevent someone from getting a job or renting an apartment – especially if that person has received a pardon. And when someone gets a second chance, that should be a real opportunity to start over and succeed,” said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. “I believe Pennsylvania is a place for second chances — and my Administration has invested in and advanced real criminal justice system reform. This is a cause that resonates beyond party lines, and that’s why this Clean Slate legislation was cosponsored by both Democrats and Republicans. This life changing bill includes a commonsense set of steps to remove unnecessary barriers for Pennsylvanians who want to rebuild their lives and meaningfully contribute to our communities — and I’m proud to be here with the lawmakers who worked together in a bipartisan manner to get this to my desk.”

Governor Shapiro believes people who have paid their debt to society and are working to put their lives back together deserve to have a real path to opportunity and success – and his Administration has taken commonsense steps to remove unnecessary barriers for Pennsylvanians who want to rebuild their lives and meaningfully contribute to our communities.

During his first year in office, Governor Shapiro also [signed historic probation reform into law](#), making sure Pennsylvanians who receive a pardon will have their records cleared automatically and ensuring minor technical violations don’t land someone on probation back in jail.

As a state representative, **Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis** sponsored a bill to provide automatic expungement for pardoned individuals, and he helped get this vital Clean Slate legislation over the finish line as Lieutenant Governor. The historic Clean Slate law was originally signed into law in 2018 by Governor Tom Wolf, leading the nation by making Pennsylvania the first state to seal criminal records through automation.

This is the third expansion of the law, which now allows those convicted of certain non-violent drug felonies to have their records sealed automatically after ten years without another conviction and reduces the waiting period for summary convictions from ten to five years. Act 36 also changes Pennsylvania’s Clean Slate program by expanding the list of criminal offenses that are afforded limited access and reduces the amount of time

an individual must stay conviction-free before a record of a misdemeanor or summary offense becomes eligible for clean slate.

“The Governor and I believe Pennsylvania should be a place where people have second chances. Over the past year and a half, we have heard from many Pennsylvanians who have worked hard to turn their lives around and make amends,” said **Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis**. “As a state representative, I introduced legislation to address the injustices in our pardon process, and as Lieutenant Governor, I was proud to continue to champion this cause, working with Chairman Harris and Senator Lisa Baker to incorporate automatic expungement language into the final version of this bill. This is a big win not just for the folks who earn a pardon, but also for their families and our communities – and it’s also a bipartisan win.”

The Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) have been working to implement Clean Slate reform since the bill was signed in December. To ensure the process runs smoothly and effectively, PSP is working diligently to build out the process for expunging these records and is also preparing necessary changes to the Computerized Criminal History database.

PSP is prepared to begin processing summary convictions – minor offenses including things like disorderly conduct, loitering, and low-level criminal mischief – this week while working toward full implementation in the coming months. This legislation impacts 6 million criminal records involving summary convictions. PSP plans to test the system in the fall and roll out the program by next year.

[Act 36](#) of 2023 was formerly [House Bill 689](#) sponsored by Chairman Harris, which received bipartisan support in the General Assembly.

"Pennsylvania's Clean Slate law, hailed as 'model legislation,' unlocks housing, financial, and employment opportunities through automated record-sealing, with 12 states following suit, and I am proud to have been on this journey for over five years," said **Majority Appropriations Chairman Jordan A. Harris**. "Today, HB 689 expands eligibility, allowing those with non-violent drug felonies a second chance after ten years, recognizing it as common sense for reformed individuals. This proactive approach not only removes barriers to employment but also strengthens the economy and communities, aligning with the urgent need to bridge the job-employment gap and reduce recidivism rates."

“We’re here today to talk about an issue that really helps people in Pennsylvania. We have our Governor and our Lieutenant Governor – they’re here to represent Pennsylvanians, and they’re here to support this legislation because this helps Pennsylvanians. We are all here for that,” said **Representative Sheryl Delozier**. “This is an issue that is supported by Republicans and Democrats – this is not a political issue, it’s a people issue. Pennsylvania got it right. Pennsylvania moved this legislation forward and Pennsylvania recognized how important it is that we work together.”

"Politics is about doing the people's business, so your job is to get something done for the people," said **Senator Tony Williams**. "Millions of Pennsylvania – rural and suburban, white and Black, Latino and Asian – suffer from this circumstance. I'm proud to be standing here today with a Commonwealth of representation from what Pennsylvania really looks like – and no matter what people tell you, we're here to get stuff done and we're prepared to get stuff done."

"This is Clean Slate 3.0 – and I expect this momentum that's been created by this legislation to be the fuse and the fuel for so many other pieces of criminal justice reform legislation that has to be done," said **Senator Camera Bartolotta**. "We have to show people if you make a mistake, and you do everything right, and you pay your debt to society – you have a path forward. You don't have to pay for that for the rest of your life. This is a way to at least open the door to success. You don't have to pay for a mistake for the rest of your life. And there's so many other pieces of legislation that this team and the others in this room have been working so hard on and I want to see us run with all of it."

"When the Justice Action Network was founded, some of our very first meetings were with these leaders in this room, and we instantly knew that something special was happening here in Harrisburg," said **Jenna Butler, President & Executive Director of the Justice Action Network**. "No matter the debate and discord and other issues – these leaders were always willing to put aside their differences and work together on evidence-based, data driven criminal justice policy. Policy that is proven to make the citizens of this Commonwealth safer every single day, policies that are proven to restore families and communities and individuals and hope in this state, policies that are proven to empower individuals reach new heights of economic prosperity and give employers access to a robust workforce right here in Pennsylvania. Clean Slate is going to jumpstart those goals of safety and hope and prosperity."

"Pennsylvania currently has 74 available skilled workers for every 100 available jobs. We have a gap in Pennsylvania – we have to look for every person who's willing to contribute, who wants to be part of our workforce, and we have to work with them to get the skills and the education necessary so they can fulfill their lives and their dreams right here in the Commonwealth," said **Luke Bernstein, President and CEO of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry**. "Employers across our state and business community more broadly care about removing barriers to employment, not putting more barriers up. This law, since its inception, has helped more than 1.2 million Pennsylvanians, encouraging them to reenter the workforce. Expanding record clearance encourages more formerly incarcerated individuals to apply for and accept jobs and offers a largely untapped pool of skilled workers for Pennsylvania employers. This is not only good economically – this is good for our communities."

The Governor believes people who have paid their debt to society and are working to put their lives back together deserve a real path to opportunity and success – and his 2024-25 budget proposal provides care and opportunity to those in the justice system to

make our legal system more fair and pave the way for more Pennsylvanians to get the second chances they deserve. His proposed investments include:

- **\$5 million** to ensure those facing eviction have access to legal counsel.
- **\$5 million** for the Department of Corrections (DOC) to hire additional staff for to reduce the use of Extended Restrictive Housing, formerly solitary confinement, in correctional facilities.
- A **\$4 million** increase through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD) to implement the changes made through recent probation reform and to provide additional resources to counties for adult probation services that reduce recidivism, increase the use of evidence-based practices, reduce caseload sizes, and improve the quality of services.
- A **\$2.5 million increase** for indigent defense to be funded through PCCD and the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee. Previously, Pennsylvania was one of only two states in the country that did not allocate state funding for indigent defense – but the 2023-24 budget funded statewide indigent defense for the [first time in Pennsylvania history](#).
- An additional **\$239,000** to support staff well-being at DOC. Well-supported and resilient corrections staff are better equipped to handle the stressors of the job, which directly impact the safety and security of correctional facilities.

For more information on how the Shapiro Administration is working to ensure the justice system works for all Pennsylvanians, click [here](#).

# # #