

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports S. 1380, the “Clean Slate Act of 2021.” This bipartisan bill would provide a framework for giving formerly incarcerated Americans with low-level and nonviolent criminal offenses a second chance in society. This would be done by sealing records related to simple possession of marijuana, arrests for certain drug-related crimes that did not result in conviction, and a petition process to seal records related to conviction for certain nonviolent offenses. **Members who cosponsor this legislation will receive credit for the Leadership component of the Chamber’s “How They Voted” scorecard.**

Sealing records for minor crimes and misdemeanors is an issue of race and opportunity. People of color face higher incarceration rates and this puts them in cycles of poverty and joblessness. This cycle negatively impacts them and their families. High rates of incarceration also have a negative effect on the U.S. economy. One study shows that the U.S. gross domestic product loses up to \$65 billion per year¹. That number is coupled with the upwards of \$80 billion annually spent on mass incarceration.

Last year, the Chamber launched the [Equality of Opportunity Initiative](#) to develop real, sustainable solutions to help close race-based opportunity gaps in six areas: education, employment, entrepreneurship, criminal justice, health, and wealth disparities. Systemic inequalities in these six areas perpetuate broader inequalities in our society, hold back individual and business success, and hinder economic growth. As part of this effort, the Chamber is identifying and encouraging Congress to enact specific legislative solutions that help close race-based opportunity gaps.

We applaud the leadership of Sens. Bob Casey and Joni Ernst for their work on this important legislation. We strongly encourage you to cosponsor this bill.

Sincerely,



Neil L. Bradley

¹ [One Strike and You're Out - Center for American Progress](#)