

Legislation Meeting Agenda



Committee Chair: Colin Smith

800 Michaelan Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
www.westchesterlegislators.com

Monday, February 7, 2022

1:00 PM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

MINUTES APPROVAL

January 31, 2022 at 1:00 PM Minutes

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2022-70 RESO - 2022 Joint State Legislative Package

A Resolution forwarding the Westchester County 2022 Joint State Legislative Package to the County's State Delegation for consideration during the current legislative session.

2022-72 RESO-Clean Slate Act

A Resolution in support of the Clean Slate Act in relation to the automatic sealing of certain convictions in New York State.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

Resolution No. -2022

**TO THE COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK**

WHEREAS, the Committee on Legislation has reviewed the following items for the 2022 Westchester County Joint State Legislative Package; Now Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, that after considerable deliberation, it is recommended that this Honorable Board approve these legislative initiatives, and that they be presented to and considered by the New York State Legislature and Governor during the current state legislative session.

Dated: February , 2022
White Plains, New York

RESOLUTION -2022

WHEREAS, 2.3 million people in New York State have criminal conviction records; and

WHEREAS, People with criminal conviction records face numerous of civil barriers to employment, licensing, housing and educational opportunities long after they have completed their sentences; and

WHEREAS, Racial disparities and socio-economic discrimination are rampant throughout the criminal justice system, and statistics and anecdotal evidence show that convictions for even low-level offenses result in cyclical harm and structural instability for individuals, families and communities; and

WHEREAS, Excluding individuals with criminal records from full participation in society through a system of perpetual punishment creates intergenerational trauma and exacerbates racial and economic inequality; and

WHEREAS, Black and Latinx New Yorkers are far more likely to be stopped, arrested, prosecuted, convicted and incarcerated in the criminal justice system than white New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, People of color are far more likely to be discriminated against based on a conviction record; and

WHEREAS, People who have been to prison lose an average of \$484,400 in earnings over their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Excluding individuals with conviction histories from the workforce costs the economy between \$78 billion and \$87 billion in lost gross domestic product; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 95% of incarcerated people return to their communities after serving their sentences; and

WHEREAS, Giving people access to jobs, housing, education and licenses to practice a trade increases their participation in the economy and reduces the likelihood they will return to prison, thereby making our communities safer; and

WHEREAS, Only approximately 2,500 of an estimated 600,000 eligible people — or less than 0.5% — have had their records sealed since New York’s current application-based sealing law went into effect in 2017; and

WHEREAS, A system of automatic sealing and expungement of criminal records is essential to provide relief to those who need it most; and

WHEREAS, The “Clean Slate Act” (S1553B/A6399A), sponsored by Senator Zellnor Myrie and Assembly Member Catalina Cruz, would require that most criminal records be sealed

automatically after their time has been served, the completion of any probationary period, plus a set number of years has passed without incurring any additional criminal charges. While the record would be sealed for civil purposes such as obtaining employment and housing, the record will remain available when fingerprinting is required and to the police, prosecutors, and the courts; and

WHEREAS, The Clean Slate Act exempts certain offenses from being sealed, including sex offenses; and

WHEREAS, The Clean Slate Act would remove systemic barriers to stable housing, employment and education and allow millions of New Yorkers participate fully in civic life and in their communities; and

WHEREAS, Numerous other states, including Pennsylvania, Michigan, Utah and Connecticut, have already passed “Clean Slate” legislation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Westchester Board of Legislators supports the Clean Slate Act and calls on the New York State Legislature to pass S1553B/A6399A or similar legislation, and for the Governor to sign it into law; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Board of Legislators is directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor Kathy Hochul, Lieutenant Governor Brian Benjamin, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and the Members of the Westchester County State Delegation.

Dated _____, 2022
White Plains, NY

COMMITTEE ON