

Good evening chair and members of the judicial committee.

My name is Alexandra Gonzalez. I am here today to express my strong support for H5647 for personal reasons.

Many states across the country are already embracing similar reforms. For instance, California legislation SB 731 was created to 1) allow people who may have had a substance abuse-related conviction that is over 5 years old, and the conviction has been expunged to obtain a teaching credential, 2) expand the eligibility of petition-based expungements, 3) expand the eligibility of automatic sealing of arrest records, and 4) expand the eligibility of automatic expungements. Individuals can have certain convictions expunged after completing their sentences, while states like Illinois have enacted laws that allow for the automatic expungement of eligible offenses.

More interesting New Hampshire

Discretion is given to the court to handle annulment (even multiple convictions) and Annulment of conviction records. Most crimes may be “annulled” by the sentencing court in response to a petition if, “in the court's opinion, the annulment will assist in the petitioner’s rehabilitation and will be consistent with the public welfare.” N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. § [651:5\(I\)](#).<sup>3</sup> The court may grant or deny an annulment without a hearing unless the petitioner requests a hearing. *Id.* In a 2012 opinion, the Supreme Court of New Hampshire ruled that, in exercising discretion to grant an annulment pursuant to the “public welfare” standard, the court *may consider such factors as the number and circumstances of the convictions at issue, the defendant’s age at the time of each conviction, the time span of the convictions, and the particular manner in which annulment would aid the defendant’s rehabilitation—for example, by allowing him to obtain a professional license or to pursue a calling otherwise prohibited to those convicted of a crime.*

If New Hampshire and this bill which would allow judicial discretion almost like this approach not only help individuals reintegrate but also contribute to safer communities by reducing barriers to employment and encouraging positive contributions to society. By following the lead of these states and supporting H5647, we can send a powerful message that our justice system believes in the potential for redemption.

I urge this committee to pass these bills and help create a more inclusive and just community for all. Thank you for your time and consideration.