

Roberta DiMezza

From: Michelle Hines <mhines@amoshouse.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 29, 2026 6:34 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Support for H7508 & H7204

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

You don't often get email from mhines@amoshouse.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Chairperson, McEntee, Vice Chair Knight, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Michelle Hines, and I am part of the Amos House community. I am writing in support of House Bills H7508 and H7204, the Clean Slate Initiative.

I support these bills because I was formerly incarcerated 18 years ago, and my record still affects my life today. In 2009, when my life was falling apart, I entered the Amos House shelter because I was homeless and needed help to stop using crack cocaine. Since then, my life has been transformed. I reunited with my children, got married, became a homeowner in Providence, earned my bachelor's degree, and am now enrolled in and almost finished with my first year of the MSW program at Rhode Island College.

Even with all that progress, my record continues to follow me. Last year, when I applied for my LCDP and for my master's program, I still had to explain charges from 18 years ago. That caused me a lot of anxiety because I was left wondering whether I would be judged or turned down. As I continue moving forward in my career and helping women and men like me, I hope my past does not continue to be a barrier.

I advocate for this bill because even though I served my time and completed probation, I still feel the impact of my record. Even as a taxpayer, homeowner, and educated professional, it remains a barrier. I also see this every day in the lives of the people I serve. A criminal record makes it harder to find employment and housing, and that can be especially discouraging for people in early recovery who are also dealing with substance use and mental health challenges. These barriers can make it much harder to keep moving forward.

The current expungement process is confusing and time-consuming. For people who struggle with reading and writing, face language barriers, or live paycheck to paycheck without paid time off, the process can feel impossible. Taking a day off work to deal with court paperwork or hearings can create a real hardship.

Today, I am the Program Director of the women's shelter I once graduated from. I advocate for the individuals who are following in my footsteps, and I respectfully ask you to vote yes on these bills.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Best,

Michelle Hines, BA, LCDP, CCHW, CPRS
Program Coordinator
Amos House
Women's 90-Day Program
mhines@amoshouse.com
401-272-0220 x227