



Testimony in support of Amendments to House Bill 7079a (Entitled: Act Relating to Criminal Procedure - Expungement of Criminal Offenses)

Dear Representative Craven and members of the House of Representatives,

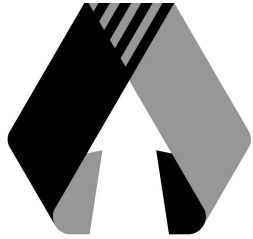
My name is Colleen Daley Ndoye, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Project Weber/RENEW, a Rhode Island-based nonprofit organization that provides harm reduction services, recovery support, and clinical care to more than 7000 people annually. Our population includes those experiencing homelessness, those with experience in the criminal legal system, people with substance use disorder and people in recovery across Rhode Island.

Project Weber/RENEW strongly supports efforts to expand expungement rights in the State of Rhode Island. As a peer-based organization we see every day that expungement gives people the ability to access numerous opportunities that they were previously denied, and many of our staff have taken advantage of the opportunities resulting from expunging their records. These opportunities range from housing to employment, student loans to civic engagement, and even as simple as being a chaperone on their child's field trip. Expungement allows people to move on with their lives and contribute positively to their families and communities.

However, the bill as it is currently written may inadvertently roll back some current rights that RI law currently allows, by rolling back judicial discretion. We would like to express our **strong support** for the amendments to this legislation that:

Decrease the waiting time for multiple felony expungements from 15 to 10 years. As we know, RI has some of the longest probation sentences in the country, and therefore this extensive waiting time is still often occurring an additional decade after the original crime or crimes have occurred.

Ensure that everyone currently eligible for an expungement remains eligible under the new legislation. Most concerning to us is the list of prohibited crimes, including some common misdemeanors like possessing a knife over 3 inches, which would not only prevent someone from getting that charge expunged, but would prevent them from getting all other charges expunged.



WEBER*RENEW

We urge the House to support these amendments and help ensure that this legislation achieves its intended effect, to increase the expungement rights of Rhode Islanders who have worked to transform their lives, and allow them to move forward as valued members of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colleen'.

Colleen Daley Ndoye

Project Weber/RENEW
Providence, Rhode Island