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California State Senate

SENATOR
ELOISE GÓMEZ REYES
TWENTY-NINTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES:
EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
HOUSING
JUDICIARY
LEGISLATIVE ETHICS
RULES

SB 245 (Reyes): Streamlining Expungements for Fire Camp Participants

SUMMARY

SB 245 would streamline and clarify the expungement process established under AB 2147 (Reyes, 2020) for individuals who have successfully participated in the California Conservation Camp Program, institutional fire house programs, or county incarcerated individual hand crew programs.

BACKGROUND

Incarcerated fire crew members have proved themselves as heroes, courageously protecting homes and communities during major fire emergencies, recently exemplified during the LA fires earlier this year. After the signing of AB 2147, individuals who successfully participated in the specified fire house and crew programs are eligible to petition for expungement of their records, ultimately allowing them to pursue a career in firefighting.

Yet, despite their accomplishments and the state's efforts to provide a pathway to reentry many of these individuals still struggle to obtain expungements they earned the right to pursue under AB 2147.

In the years following AB 2147's passage several operational challenges have been identified such as: delays in certificate confirmations, lack of legal assistance to initiate their expungement, insufficient data sharing between the California Department

of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), courts, and other agencies, as well as restrictions on licensing opportunities for those with prior convictions.

These individuals have fought for themselves and for California residents to earn their expungements which makes these delays especially egregious. Justice deferred is justice denied and the state needs to rectify these delays so these individuals are able to provide for themselves post-conviction.

THIS BILL

SB 245 addresses barriers to expungement by: automating the certification process for program completion, shifting the responsibility of initiating the expungement process from the eligible individuals to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and improving collaboration between CDCR, the DOJ, and the judiciary to facilitate better data sharing related to the expungements. The bill also ensures expungement recipients are not denied emergency medical technician certification or any other license or certification necessary to work as a firefighter.

SUPPORT

Anti-Recidivism Coalition (Co-Sponsor)
Californians for Safety and Justice (Co-Sponsor)

Initiate Justice Action (Co-Sponsor)
Root and Rebound (Co-Sponsor)
ACLU California Action (Support)
All of Us or None Los Angeles (Support)
California Public Defenders Association
(Support)
Californians United for a Responsible Budget
(Support)
Californians for United for Restorative Youth
Justice (Support)
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La Defensa (Support)
Legal Aid at Work (Support)
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Rubicon Programs (Support)
San Francisco Public Defenders (Support)
Silicon Valley De-Bug (Support)
Smart Justice (Support)
The Change Parallel Project (Support)
The W. Haywood Burns Institute (Support)
Vera Institute of Justice (Support)

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