

SB 5644: Limiting Access to Juvenile Records



BILL OVERVIEW:

Limiting access to juvenile records aims to seek justice for youth and young adults with involvement in the juvenile justice system. This bill aims to make the sealing and vacating of juvenile criminal records a streamlined process, and it seeks accountability for those who illegally share sealed or vacated records. Additionally, this bill will make juvenile justice records as confidential as dependency court records- further safeguarding youth and young adults and their futures from unwanted harm caused by leaked records.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT VOICE:

Youth and young adult advocates at The Mockingbird Society have been dedicated to working on this legacy issue for years now. They have faced several adjustments and changes but continue to pursue this topic for all those being discriminated against based on their records. They seek accountability and justice from their legal system, and they expect to get it. Youth and young adults deserve for their records to be kept confidential and safe from those who might use them against them in future opportunities like housing and employment, instead of it following them for the rest of their lives.

BILL SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS:

- Sponsored by Senator Frame, LD 36 (King County area)

ACTION STEPS:

- *The Mockingbird Society is preparing to meet with legislators to get this bill passed this legislative session!*

BACKGROUND:

- Youth and young adults in WA state are currently able to have a resolved juvenile justice record sealed and vacated so it is no longer accessible by the public
- Many youth and young adults are not aware of or educated on the sealing and vacating process and miss out on the opportunity after it's too late
- The public nature of a juvenile criminal record puts the youth or young adult at risk of the file being copied and sold or disseminated illegally- especially after it is meant to be sealed and vacated
- Currently, juvenile record information follows youth and young adults into adulthood and stops them from accessing crucial services and life opportunities

IMPACTS:

- Youth and young adults in the system will now be notified and informed/ educated about the vacating and sealing processes
- Having a record be meaningfully sealed and vacated means that the youth or young adult will no longer have to worry that their private and confidential information being leaked and creating barriers in their future
- If confidential information about a youth or young adult ends up being leaked, the youth or young adult will receive monetary compensation for their damages
- An automatic vacating and sealing process will ensure youth and young adults are not missing out on this opportunity due to lack of information
- Youth and young adults will no longer have their criminal record exposed for public view online, and instead it will remain confidential to only the most necessary parties, mitigating its ability to be illegally copied

If you know of any potential community partners or supporters for this topic, please contact Mockingbird's Acting Public Policy Director / Lobbyist at sam@sdmartinconsulting.com