

ESHB 1651
(Kagi)

No fiscal
impact

When barred from important opportunities, youth can become trapped in a cycle of poverty and homelessness.

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Actual email in support of bill:

"I am a former foster child who aged out of care in 2010.

I am currently homeless, without employment and without education.

I am running into problems getting a job due to a juvenile court record.

I had a felony at the age of 14 and have fines in the amount of \$750.

If I can't seal my record, I can't get a job. If I can't get a job, I can't get a home. If I can't get a home, I can't pay for a GED.

I need your help."

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES ACT

REMOVING BARRIERS FOR REHABILITATED YOUTH
UNANIMOUSLY PASSED THE HOUSE IN 2013 & 2014

The Washington State juvenile justice system is about rehabilitation. Society and our economy benefit when rehabilitated youth reintegrate into society and become law-abiding, tax-paying members of their communities. A major barrier to reintegration is the widespread dissemination and easy public access to generally non-serious juvenile offense records in our state.

Washington's Current Policies Prevent Youth from Reintegrating into Society:

- Having a public juvenile offense record can prevent youth from obtaining education, employment, and housing - leading to a **cycle of poverty, homelessness, and crime**.
- Washington is **one of only eight states** where juvenile records are open and published online. As a result, **Washington's youth are at a direct disadvantage compared to youth from other states**.
- Our current records policies have a **discriminatory impact on minority youth**.

The Youth Opportunities Act Will Diminish this Barrier to Success, While Promoting Public Safety and Government Accountability By:

- Making juvenile offense records confidential, **EXCEPT** for the records of a youth that was adjudicated of any serious violent offenses or a sexual offense.
- Continuing to allow complete access to all records by courts, prosecutors, and law enforcement.
- Continuing to keep juvenile court proceedings open to the public, which ensures justice is being administered fairly and openly.
- Continuing to allow access to records for research and statistical purposes, which ensures that the public can keep our courts and state accountable, fair, and just.

The Youth Opportunities Act Will Give Our State's Youth a Chance at Success

- It allows youth to pursue educational, employment, and other opportunities without being held back by childhood mistakes.
- It benefits society by promoting employment for Washington's youth, enabling them to contribute to the economy.
- In 2013 and 2014, the House voted the bill out **unanimously**, emphasizing that it strikes the appropriate balance between rehabilitation and public safety.

FAITH ACTION NETWORK
A Partnership for the Common Good



Children's Campaign Fund
Helping elect champions for children in Washington State



Friends of Youth



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE
A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

YOUTHCARE
Homeless youth • Off the streets • Preparing for life



The Mockingbird Society
Building a world-class foster care system



treehouse™
giving foster kids a childhood and a future



**RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE**



WACDL
Washington Association of
Criminal Defense Lawyers

