SECOND CHANCES FOR PEOPLE WITH RECORDS
BENEFIT ALL GEORGIANS

THE PROBLEM
CRIMINAL RECORDS CREATE LIFETIME BARRIERS UNDER GEORGIA’S NARROW LAW

Unlike in most states, in Georgia, almost all convictions stay on your record forever. Only some misdemeanors an individual was convicted of before they turned 21 years old can be expunged. Criminal records create barriers to employment, housing, higher education, and other opportunities, long after the sentence is over.

THE SOLUTION
EXPUNGE CERTAIN CONVICTIONS FOR REHABILITATED INDIVIDUALS

The Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform recommended the expansion of restriction and sealing for certain convictions. Research clearly shows that enabling individuals to remove old convictions from their record, while maintaining law enforcement access, benefits families and public safety.

Georgia Justice Project is a 32-year-old nonprofit that represents individuals who are or were involved with the criminal justice system. We have worked closely with the Georgia legislature and Council on Criminal Justice Reform. We have successfully advocated for 19 changes in the law to remove barriers to reentry and increase access to employment and other opportunities for people with criminal records.
SECOND CHANCES FOR PEOPLE WITH RECORDS

WHY THIS MATTERS

INCREASES PUBLIC SAFETY

The financial stability, structure, and social networks gained from employment help people with a record rehabilitate and reduce their likelihood of re-offending, increasing the safety of all.

In Illinois, steady employment led to a 62% reduction in recidivism among individuals with a record.¹

According to the University of Michigan, fewer than 2% of people were re-convicted within five years of clearing their records.²

IMPROVES EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A University of Michigan study found that a cleared record increased likelihood of employment by 11% and wages by 22% within the first year.³

A Stanford University study found that record expungement led to an average increase of $6,190 in yearly income per individual.⁴

STRENGTHENS THE ECONOMY

Qualified job candidates with a record are often passed over, leaving employers unable to fill open positions in a tight labor market.

The national economy would regain the $87 billion and 1.9 million workers that are lost when people with a criminal history are excluded from the labor market.⁵

A Stanford University study found that the benefits of expungement outweighed costs by $5,760 per individual.⁶

Georgia should join the 38 states, including its neighbors North Carolina, Louisiana, and Arkansas, that allow expungement of certain convictions. Communities will be safer and Georgia’s economy will improve when rehabilitated individuals get a second chance.

⁵Bucknor, C. and Barber, A. (2016). The price we pay: economic costs of barriers to employment for former prisoners and people convicted of felonies. Center for Economic and Policy Research.