

# Hartford Courant

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Connecticut youth deserve a clean slate

APR 11, 2019

The Connecticut legislature's Judiciary Committee is considering a progressive bill, SB 691: An Act Concerning Erasure of Criminal Records, which would provide records erasure for adults with a criminal record who have stayed crime-free for a certain number of years. There is a broad base of public support for this pending legislation that will ensure individuals with records who have shown they have rehabilitated are able to move on with their lives.

Ensuring that youth have a clean slate is equally critical.

Connecticut law requires juvenile records to remain inaccessible to the public. However, those records are still accessible to state agencies and law enforcement and can be inadvertently or inappropriately disclosed. When this happens, these records create barriers to school enrollment, employment, professional licensure, enlistment in the armed forces, housing and more.

Even when youth exit the juvenile justice system, records of court involvement are often roadblocks to their efforts to move forward with their lives.

Connecticut youth tend to believe that records disappear automatically after their cases are closed. However, this is far from the truth, even in Connecticut, a nationwide leader in juvenile justice policy.

We strongly encourage the Judiciary Committee to vote favorably on this bill, and to include an amendment that provides a clean slate opportunity to Connecticut youth.

*Marisa M. Halm and Riya Saha Shah*

*Marisa Halm is director of the Center for Children's Advocacy Juvenile Justice Project. The Center is a Connecticut nonprofit law firm that promotes and protects the legal rights of at-risk children and youth.*

*Riya Saha Shah is the managing director of Juvenile Law Center, a national nonprofit public interest law firm that advocates for youth in the child welfare and justice systems.*