



July 16, 2020

**Testimony on S.2820 to the House Ways and Means Committee and Joint Committee on the Judiciary**

Submitted to [Testimony.HWMJudiciary@mahouse.gov](mailto:Testimony.HWMJudiciary@mahouse.gov) on 7/17/20 at 8:50am

Dear Chair Cronin, Chair Michlewitz, Vice Chair Day, and Vice Chair Garlick-

We are so appreciative of your willingness to consider expanding the youth expungement law from 2018. We know this isn't necessarily in the original scope of a police standards and accountability bill. However, after George Floyd's tragic murder and with everything happening in the streets of our communities, our young people have mobilized in a powerful way by relaunching the **Expungement Movement**. The fact that the Senate moved to expand the expungement law has instilled hope in the hundreds of young people at UTEC and our various partner organization statewide. We're writing to you to respectfully ask that you include a similar expansion in the House bill.

Our UTEC organizers have secured close to 90 statewide organizations, unions, business groups, and gun violence prevention advocates to join in coalition to support the expansion. We know that over the last two sessions nearly half of the current members of the House have cosponsored legislation to give young people a second chance. We have also seen that very few young people have been eligible, which we know wasn't the original intent of the law.

Each year UTEC serves over 175 justice-involved emerging adults and it is a tragic reality for so many of them to experience negative police encounters. After looking at all of the CORI records of our members, these interactions nearly always lead to a juvenile or criminal record that stays with them forever – even if their cases were dismissed.

Expungement is more than forgiveness; it is a tool in the toolbox of Gun Violence Prevention and Safe and Successful Youth Initiative grantees who rely heavily on workforce development programming to support a young person to positive outcomes. These models are finding success in cities like Brockton, Boston, Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill, and many more. We also ask that you consider the massive benefits of this expansion, including the increase in mental health benefits for people of color as was noted in an **MIT Health Impact Assessment** (attached).

Now is an even more important time to consider this because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the harsh impact it has had on employment. Many folks who live with a criminal record would be uniquely helped in their search for new jobs as we continue to grapple with the coronavirus.

Please consider an expansion to the existing expungement law as the House takes up S.2820 to address the major barriers our young people face as our program seeks to achieve our outcomes of reducing recidivism, increasing employment and increasing education opportunities. This is the best time to do it as so many people are focused on racial justice. We appreciate your continued support and leadership.

Thank you for your consideration,

Gregg Croteau  
CEO, UTEC Inc.

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Organizing Director, UTEC Inc.