



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 1, 2017

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Rep. Steffen & Rep. Goyke: Pathways to Employment for Youthful Offenders
Legislators introduce bipartisan legislation to fix Wisconsin's expungement law

Madison— Today, State Representative David Steffen (R-Howard) and State Representative Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee) released bipartisan legislation which provides for comprehensive reform to Wisconsin's outdated and inconsistent expungement law. Current law requires a judge to make an expungement determination at the time of sentencing. This proposal would remove that requirement, allowing youthful offenders a chance to have their record expunged after completing their sentence, and giving judges the opportunity to consider an individual's post-sentence behavior when determining expungement. The bill also provides a clear definition of what expungement means, how expunged records are to be handled, and requires that individuals be informed of their expungement options at the time of sentencing.

"This proposal is a comprehensive approach to fixing the flaws in our state's expungement law, and I am excited to be leading alongside Representative Goyke on this much needed, bipartisan legislation. Current expungement law is not only unclear and inconsistent, it simply does not serve its purpose—which is to provide youthful offenders who have turned their lives around, an opportunity at a fresh start with a clean slate. This legislation ensures that in Wisconsin, expungement truly means expungement," said Rep. Steffen.

Current law is unclear as to whether an individual must disclose of an expunged record on an employment application. This proposal clarifies that, for employment purposes, an expunged record is not considered a conviction.

"This important legislation is the key to removing barriers to employment for so many Wisconsin citizens. Over the past four months Rep. Steffen and I have worked with numerous stakeholders, both practitioner and workforce. Our bill fully puts Wisconsin's expungement law in line with the rest of the country, while also providing a better future for citizens and our State's employers," said Rep. Goyke.

The proposal makes no changes to the crimes and/or ages eligible for expungement under current law. In order to be eligible, an individual must have been under the age of 25 when they committed the crime. Only low level offenses including misdemeanors and certain H and I felonies are eligible to be considered for expungement.

"Many youthful offenders find themselves in court after making one dumb decision which ends up haunting them for the rest of their life, keeping them from a good job which is key to staying



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on the right path. This bill ensures that for people in this situation, they are informed on what expungement is and have the opportunity to demonstrate why they deserve to have their record expunged,” said Rep. Steffen.

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