

Rep. Goyke: And Rep. Steffen to reintroduce expungement legislation

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Non-Partisan Wisconsin Policy Forum Report Validates Need for Wisconsin Expungement Law Reform to Help Citizens and Strengthen Wisconsin's Workforce

MADISON - This week the non-partisan Wisconsin Policy Forum released a report, [A Fresh Start: Wisconsin's Atypical Expungement Law and Options for Reform](#), highlighting the need for reform to Wisconsin's current expungement law. The report follows on bi-partisan legislation introduced this session by Rep. David Steffen (R-Green Bay) and Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee) that provides comprehensive reform to Wisconsin's outdated and inconsistent expungement law. [Assembly Bill 331](#), introduced last May, lays the groundwork legislatively for many of the policy recommendations found within the report.

Rep. Steffen and Rep. Goyke thank the Wisconsin Policy Forum for publishing this important report.

"This report is an excellent example of why there needs to be reform to Wisconsin's expungement law. It validates many of the proposals put forward this session in Assembly Bill 331. I am excited to be leading alongside Representative Goyke on this bipartisan issue and much needed change. 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 a fresh start to rebuild," said Rep. Steffen.

"We want to ensure that in Wisconsin expungement truly means expungement. We will be back next session with legislation that will accomplish just that, while also

removing barriers to employment.”

Current law requires a judge to make an expungement determination at the time of sentencing. Future legislation will remove that requirement, allowing youthful offenders a chance to have their record expunged after completing their sentence, and give judges the opportunity to consider an individual’s post-sentence behavior when determining expungement. Wisconsin employers and workforce leaders will receive a clear definition of what expungement means and how expunged records are to be handled. Individuals will also be informed of their expungement options at the time of sentencing, among other additional legislative changes.

After reviewing the report Rep. Goyke stated, “This report will help show our colleagues in the legislature why reform is needed. Access to employment is key to ensuring individuals who have straightened out their lives will continue on the right path. Our proposal is a critical step to ensuring that a pathway to employment for youthful offenders exists, which serves a direct benefit to both the youth, as well as employers throughout our state looking to fill vacancies.”

“Over the past year and a half Rep. Steffen and I have worked with numerous stakeholders, including a diverse group of individuals and families from across Wisconsin who contacted our offices in support of reform and providing personal stories of why it is needed. We thank them for their continued engagement and advocacy. We will continue to work together this summer and fall as we craft a proposal that will fully put 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.”