

Americans for Prosperity-Wisconsin: Senate should support second chances

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Contact: Eric Bott, EBott@afphq.org

Madison, Wis. – Americans for Prosperity-Wisconsin (AFP-WI) on Tuesday applauded the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety for passing Senate Bill 39, the Pathways to Employment Act, which makes smart reforms to Wisconsin’s criminal justice system to help provide second chances to people who have paid their debt to society. The group also thanked bill sponsors Sen. Alberta Darling and Sen. Fred Risser for their leadership on the issue and Chairman Van Wanggaard for bringing the bill to a vote in committee. AFP-WI now urges the Senate to bring SB 39 to the floor for a vote.

AFP-WI State Director Eric Bott issued the following statement:

“People who have paid their debt to society deserve a second chance to put their past behind them, get back on their feet, and build a life of fulfillment. By giving judges more discretion over whether a criminal record can be sealed, the Pathways to Employment Act would improve public safety and help nonviolent ex-offenders get a job and an education. We thank Sens. Darling, Risser, and Waanggaard for guiding this bill through committee and we encourage the Senate to bring this bill to the floor for a vote immediately.”

Background:

AFP-WI testified before the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety in

support of SB 39. Read the testimony [here](#).

Under current Wisconsin law, a court may expunge a person's criminal record of a crime if the person committed that crime before the age of 25, the person had not been previously convicted of a felony, the crime was not a violent felony, and the maximum term imprisonment for said crime is six years or less. Current law also allows that expungement orders can only be made at sentencing. Wisconsin is the only state that requires judges to determine expungement eligibility when somebody is sentenced, instead of when they are released, and is one of only 7 states that limits expungement opportunities based on people's age when they committed a crime.

The Pathways to Employment Act (SB 39) allows expungement eligibility for people sentenced over age 25, removes the expungement-ordered-at-sentencing requirement, and allows retroactive application of these reforms.