

SB 519

Colleagues, SB 519 is a continuation of the work on juvenile expunction that we've been engaged in for the last few years. You'll remember that in 2021 we passed SB 575, the product of a multi-year workgroup seeking to improve the process of juvenile expunction. The current court process has been unduly and unnecessarily complicated, difficult to navigate, and expensive for both the state and the individual. As a result, only 4 or 5% of eligible youth successfully apply for and make it through the system each year.

SB 575 created a process for automatic expungement for juvenile records for those youth who never had a petition filed in juvenile court or never came under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court (the juvenile equivalent of never having charges filed or never having been "found guilty"). This was the largest group of affected youth, but in some ways the easiest. We decided to start with this group, get the process in place, see how it worked, then reconvene to continue the work.

As we heard in our December committee hearing, the new program has been extremely successful, with thousands of youth getting their records expunged in the first year of implementation and with the professionals doing the work reporting

Last year we reconvened the workgroup, which again included district attorneys, OYA, Juvenile Justice departments, the Courts, and advocates in order to continue this work. The result is Senate Bill 519, which expands automatic expungement to include records for youth who have been found to be within the jurisdiction of juvenile court for acts that, if committed by an adult, would constitute a violation or misdemeanor, with some exclusions. It also reduces the number of years from 5 to 4, after which a youth not eligible for automatic expungement can apply

for expungement of records through the courts, in an effort to bring us closer to national best practices.

Colleagues, this bill comes before you with the full support of the work group. I urge you to continue to support this important work to reduce the collateral consequences of mistakes made by young people and allow them to contribute to society as they want to do and as we need them to do.