



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
In Support of S.810/H.1270 – An Act relative to the expungement of records of  
persons falsely accused and juveniles  
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In the past few years we have learned a lot about the development of the adolescent brain, including that it doesn't reach maturity until a person's early 20s.<sup>1</sup> Crime rates and abuse of alcohol are highest for young males ages 15 to 19 showing that they are most susceptible to making bad decisions, including criminal behavior, during this time of their development.

According to the Massachusetts Bar Association, Massachusetts may seal criminal records but it almost never expunges, or erases, those records.<sup>2</sup> This bill allows for sealing of youthful offenses after 5 years of a clean record, followed by expungement, or erasure, of a person's juvenile record, giving a person a clean slate, provided that it has been another 5 years after their record has been sealed (ignoring minor motor vehicle violations). This bill also allows for automatic expungement for all eligible youthful offenses when the juvenile reaches the age of 28 instead of putting the burden on the individual, assuming that they have maintained a clean record.

In addition, it is remarkable that in Massachusetts it is virtually impossible to expunge an adult record of a person who has been falsely accused, in cases of mistaken identity, and due to clerical error. This bill makes expungement automatic as a matter of course in such cases. This change is long overdue and is the law in most other states.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has long believed in an individual's Constitutional rights and in protecting children which is why we strongly support S.810 and H.1270 – An Act relative to the expungement of records of persons falsely accused and juveniles.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-still-under-construction/index.shtml?utm\\_source=LifeSiteNews.com+Daily+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=2c0fa9560b-LifeSiteNews\\_com\\_Intl\\_Full\\_Text\\_12\\_18\\_2012](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-still-under-construction/index.shtml?utm_source=LifeSiteNews.com+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=2c0fa9560b-LifeSiteNews_com_Intl_Full_Text_12_18_2012)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.massbar.org/publications/lawyers-journal/2015/june/nobody%E2%80%99s-perfect-the-need-for-new-expungement-law>