



California expunged nearly one million old conviction records in 2024, DOJ data shows

Historic recent laws give more than eight million Californians opportunity to fully move forward in their lives

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OAKLAND, Calif. — Nearly one million old conviction records that no longer reflect who a person has or strives to become were expunged in 2024 alone under historic California laws enacted in recent years giving millions of Californians the opportunity to fully move forward in their lives for the first time.

According to [data released last week](#) by the state Department of Justice, 929,322 old conviction records were permanently expunged last year under 2019's AB 1076 and 2022's SB 731, which together make most every conviction record in California eligible for permanent expungement, meaning they no longer can be used to deny a person employment, housing or educational opportunities - all keys to regaining family stability and economic security. In order to have an old conviction record expunged, a person must fully complete their sentence and go four years without any further contact with the justice system.

"It should be good news to all Californians that the state continues to make inroads on expunging old conviction records that for too long have served only to undermine the safety of our communities by preventing folks from moving forward and contributing to society," said Tinisch Hollins, executive director of Californians for Safety and Justice, the state's leading public safety advocacy organization and co-sponsor of both AB 1076 and SB 731. "After someone has completed their sentence and paid their debts, we cannot continue to allow old legal records to create barriers to opportunity that destabilize families, undermine our economy and leave us all less safe."

Signed into law in 2019, AB 1076, authored by former San Francisco Assemblymember Phil Ting, allowed for the automatic expungement of old misdemeanor convictions, and felony convictions that didn't result in prison incarceration. Three years later, SB 731, authored by Sen. María Elena Durazo of Los Angeles, built upon 1076 by extending automatic expungement to non-violent, non-serious, non-sexual felony convictions that did result in a sentence of prison incarceration and allowing people convicted of more serious felonies to petition a judge to have their old conviction expunged. In order to have an old

conviction record expunged, a person must fully complete their sentence, including paying all fines and fees, and go four years without further contact with the justice system.

In California alone, eight million people – one in five state residents – are living with a past conviction or record. As a result, they face nearly 5,000 legal restrictions, many of which are employment related and 73 percent of which are permanent.

Nationally, 70 million Americans are living with an old criminal conviction or record that can permanently block them from getting jobs, housing, educational opportunities and other keys to attaining economic security and family stability. This is true despite the fact that many people with convictions were never incarcerated and have been crime free for years or even decades. Yet they still face nearly 50,000 different legal restrictions that can restrict economic mobility and permanently push people to the margins of society.

The new laws are also providing a much-needed economic boost to California, curbing [the estimated \\$20 billion](#) in yearly gross domestic product that the state currently loses due to the widespread unemployment and underemployment of people living with a past conviction.

A 2023 [national survey of people living with old conviction records](#) revealed the majority of people have suffered significant barriers to economic mobility as a result of their record, nearly all have been victims of crime who did not receive support in the aftermath of harm, and most experienced crisis prior to arrest.

“Expunging old conviction records is an investment in both public safety and the California economy,” Hollins said.