

The Honourable Kim Pate, C.M. | L'honorable Kim Pate, C.M. Senator for Ontario | Sénatrice pour l'Ontario

News Release

Canadians Demand Action on Criminal Record Reform

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA, NOVEMBER 17, 2021—Today, as 60 civil society groups came together as the "<u>The Fresh</u> <u>Start Coalition</u>" to launch a campaign urging the federal government to reform the criminal record system, Senators look forward to the opportunity to continue consideration of former <u>Bill S-208</u> on record expiry.

The campaign calls for the implementation of a 'spent regime', which would streamline the current record system. The proposed regime would automatically seal a person's criminal record once they have successfully completed their sentence and lived in the community for a period of time with no subsequent criminal conviction. It would appropriately replace the complicated and inaccessible record suspension application process.

The record expiry regime previously proposed in Bill S-208 would provide that solution.

Canada's current, antiquated record suspension regime deepens and perpetuates systemic inequality. People who have been held accountable and who have completed their sentences too often face fees and application requirements that can be insurmountable and therefore bar access to relief from records. Such barriers to employment, housing and other opportunities to integrate and positively contribute to communities do not increase public safety. This complex record relief system also disproportionately prolongs the criminalization of Black and Indigenous Peoples.

In 2016, the federal government committed to reforming Canada's outdated record system. "Canadians should not have to wait any longer," according to Senator Kim Pate.

"Increased fees and bureaucratic requirements have reduced applications for criminal record relief <u>by some 40%</u>. With fees set to rise again, it is imperative to act now," said Senator Pate. "Our proposed record expiry process provides a viable way forward that would enhance public safety. Let's work together to establish a better, more fair and effective system."

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