

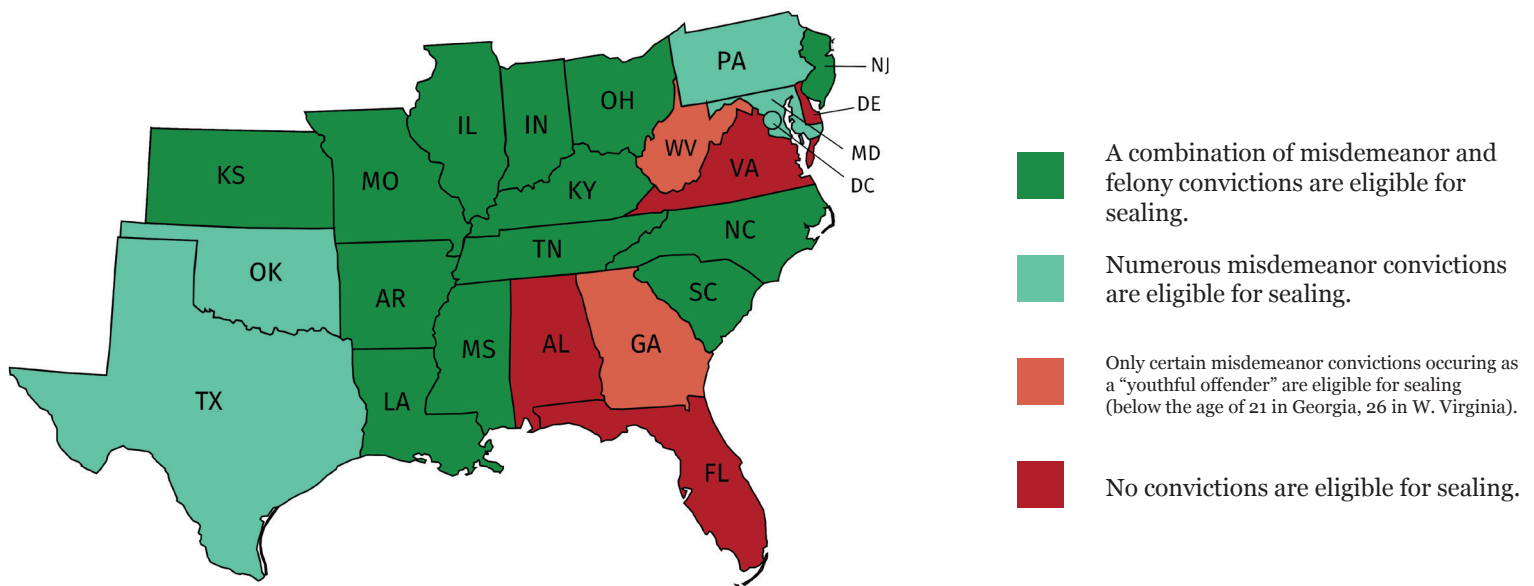
SEALING CONVICTIONS IN GEORGIA: THE CASE FOR SECOND CHANCES

*In Georgia, most convictions stay on a person's record for life. This makes it **harder for people to find jobs and housing**, and **harder for people to create a stable life** for themselves and their families.*

SEALING CONVICTIONS HELPS CREATE:

<p><u>STABLE INCOMES</u></p> <p><i>Employment barriers for people with a criminal record lead to an estimated loss of 1.7-1.9 million workers per year.¹</i></p>	<p><u>SECURE HOUSING</u></p> <p><i>66 percent of landlords and property managers won't accept an applicant with a criminal history.²</i></p>
<p><u>SAFER COMMUNITIES</u></p> <p><i>A criminal conviction increases unemployment, which increases recidivism.³</i></p>	<p><u>A STRONGER ECONOMY</u></p> <p><i>Estimates suggest \$78-87 billion lost in annual GDP as a result of employment barriers for people with a criminal history.⁴</i></p>

GEORGIA IS AN OUTLIER. MOST STATES, INCLUDING MANY OF GEORGIA'S NEIGHBORS, ALLOW FOR CONVICTIONS TO BE RESTRICTED FROM PUBLIC ACCESS.



The majority of states allow for convictions to be sealed from public access after a period of time. Georgia only provides a sealing process for misdemeanor convictions that occurred before the age of 21. Other convictions are available for the public to view forever.

The majority of states have concluded that allowing convictions to remain indefinitely in public view hurts us all.

A SAMPLING OF SEALING LAWS IN OTHER STATES:

TENNESSEE — Most misdemeanors and some felonies can be sealed 5 years after the sentence is completed.⁵

LOUISIANA — Most misdemeanor convictions can be sealed 5 years after the sentence is completed.⁶
Many felony convictions can be sealed 10 years after the sentence is completed.⁷

KENTUCKY — Most misdemeanor convictions can be sealed 5 years after the sentence is completed.⁸

Certain felony convictions can be sealed 5 years after the sentence is completed.⁹

MISSOURI — Effective January 2018, misdemeanors can be sealed 3 years after the sentence is completed.¹⁰

Many felonies can be sealed 7 years after the sentence is completed.¹¹

ARKANSAS — Most misdemeanors can be sealed 60 days after the sentence is completed.¹²
Many felonies can be sealed 5 years after the sentence is completed.¹³

“It is not in anyone’s best interests to consign ex-offenders to a permanent second-class status. Doing so will only lead to wasted lives, ruined families, and more crime.”

—The Heritage Foundation¹⁴

1. Cherrie Bucknor and Alan Barber, *The Price We Pay: Economic Costs of Barriers to Employment for Former Prisoners and People Convicted of Felonies*, Center for Economic and Policy Research, June 2016, pp. 2-3.

2. See Lahny R. Silva, *Clean Slate: Expanding Expungements and Pardons for Non-Violent Federal Offenders*, 79 U. Cin. L. Rev. (2011), p. 16.

3. See, e.g., Mark T. Berg and

Beth M. Huebner, *Reentry and the Ties that Bind: An Examination of Social Ties, Employment, and Recidivism*, Justice Quarterly, Vol. 28, No. 2, p. 397.

4. *The Price We Pay*, p. 3.

5. Tenn. Code Ann. § 40-32-101.

6. La. Code Crim. Proc. Ann. § art. 977.

7. La. Code Crim. Proc. Ann. § art. 978.

8. Ky. Rev. Stat. § 431.078.

9. Ky. Rev. Stat. § 431.073.

10. § 610.140 R.S.Mo.

11. § 610.140 R.S.Mo.

12. Ark. Code Ann. § 16-90-1405.

13. Ark. Code Ann. § 16-90-1406.

14. John Malcolm and John-Michael Seibler, *Collateral Consequences: Protecting Public Safety or Encouraging Recidivism?*, March 7, 2017.

**It is time to INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES | BOOST OUR ECONOMY
EXPAND HOUSING PROSPECTS | MAKE OUR STATE SAFER
by giving people a second chance.**

GEORGIA
JUSTICE
PROJECT