

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2556
House Judiciary Committee
February 7, 2022

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Another barrier surrounding expungement is the unanswered question of whether all fines and fees must be paid before the person is eligible for expungement. Judges are not all in agreement on this. House Bill 2556 allows a Judge to expunge a conviction without full payment of fines and fees. This makes sense. Keeping a barrier to employment in place, while requiring people to pay money before the barrier is removed is the classic Catch 22. We speak to many low income people each year who are barred from expungement because they can't fully pay the fines and fees, yet they are barred from better employment by their convictions. An expungement could get them in a position of paying the fines and fees, which don't go away if the expungement is granted.

Kansas Legal Services (KLS), a statewide non-profit corporation, is devoted to helping low income Kansans meet their basic needs through the provision of important legal and mediation services. KLS is legal aid in Kansas, providing equal access to justice for the most vulnerable Kansans. KLS served more than 18,500 persons in all 105 counties last year through eleven legal services offices and two mediation offices across the state.