

Position Statement on Record Suspension Reform

How recent legislation on 'pardons' impedes reintegration and causes pain for many

Lift the Burden is a campaign to amend the existing regime of record suspension policy to make it easier for ordinary Canadians to find employment, volunteer, and study without the burden of a criminal record. By recognizing the stigma faced by over 4 million Canadians who hold a criminal record, we are committed to lifting that burden by raising awareness and demanding change from political leaders across the country. Through public support, and cooperative change, we're looking to end the stigma of a past and served criminal record, so that the future of Canadians are not limited by their past.

Lifting the burden

As far as the Act in question has responsibly prevented handing out record suspensions to past offenders of a heinous nature, it paints many others with lesser offences with a similar brush. It does this in two ways, which we're committed to change:

- **First, the cost of a record suspension is \$631, when for nearly 30 years, it was free.** Those consulted by the government on these changes have called it a crippling "tax on the poor", and a "redundant punishment by the courts".

We want to Lift the Burden by making applications free.

- **Second, the eligibility wait times after completing sentencing have risen from 3 years for summary and 5 years for indictable offences, to 5 years and 10 years, respectively.** That's a double of the wait time for ordinary individuals, with the effects being seen across Canada every day. A 19 year old with a DUI may not have a chance at a job until they're 24. With marijuana possession, that young person may not see their burden lifted until they're into their 30s. For many, that relief may not come until it's too late. We believe Canadians deserve these rules to be rolled back.

We want to Lift the Burden, and roll back eligibility wait times to 3 years and 5 years for most offences.

By joining us at www.lifttheburden.ca, and signing our petition, you can set us on our way to working with leaders to advocate for real changes to the record suspensions and pardons system. With each signature, tweet, and share, you're helping to build the momentum towards giving millions of Canadians the relief they need to be active citizens.