"THIS IS EVERYONE'S ISSUE":

A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESSFUL CLEAN SLATE PASSAGE

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2024 CONVENING // JUNE 13-14

OUTLINE

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01 OUR TEAM

02 METHODS + DATA

03 FINDINGS: CLEAN SLATE PASSAGE: KEY ELEMENTS

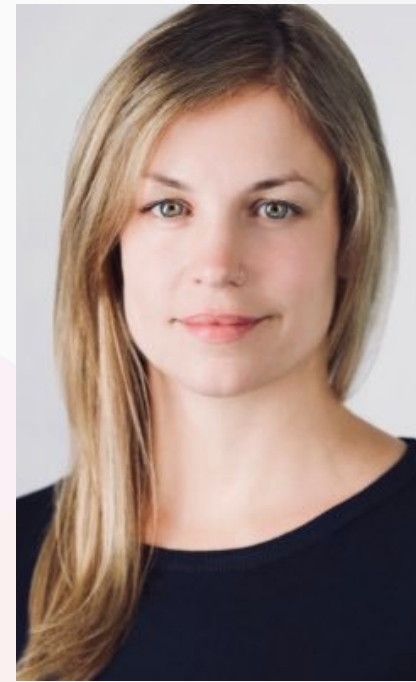**04** SUMMARY: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESSFUL POLICY CHANGE

CLEAN SLATE RESEARCH TEAM

Elsa Chen, PI
Professor,
Santa Clara Univ.

Ericka Adams, Co-PI
Associate Professor,
San Jose State Univ.

Sarah Lageson, Co-PI
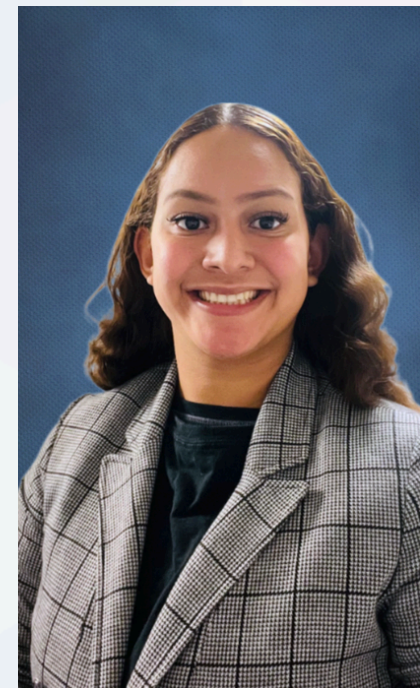Associate Professor,
Rutgers–Newark

Carolina Ribiero Caliman
Rutgers PhD Candidate

Raven Lewis
Rutgers PhD Candidate

Eva Gonzalez
SJSU Master's 2024

Desaray Castellanos Ordonez
SJSU Master's 2023

Deirdre Crawford
SCU Class of 2022

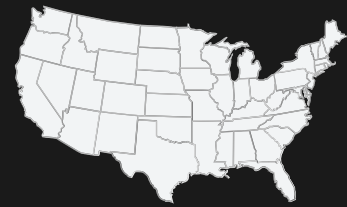**Maile Belnap**
SCU Class of 2024

Rachel Stattion
SCU Class of 2024

Sam Campos
SCU Class of 2025

METHODS

+

DATA

THE **CLEAN SLATE** INITIATIVE

STUDY DESIGN

STATES + YEARS

4 states with automatic expungement:
PA, UT, CA, NJ

Study Period:
2021-24

INTERVIEWS

Clean Slate-eligible participants
+ Follow-ups 1 year later

Community & Govt. Representatives

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Seeking Paid Participants For Study on Criminal Records

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY · SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY · RUTGERS UNIVERSITY | NEWARK

Study Title: The Impact of Automated Record Clearance on Individuals, Families, and Communities

ABOUT

The study will address the effects of criminal records on individuals' lives. We will also investigate the impact of automated/petition-based record clearance on people's experiences and the experiences of their families and communities.

ELIGIBILITY

- People 21 years of age or older convicted of a cannabis offense in California before July 1, 2019

  OR

- People who have been arrested, but not convicted or incarcerated, for ANY misdemeanor after January 1, 2021

FOR QUESTIONS:

✉ Email the study team at cacannabisstudy@gmail.com

📞 Text us at (669)-696-3967

🐦 Follow us on Twitter @cleanslatestudy

INFORMATION

- Your responses are confidential. Only our research team will have access to any of the information you tell us, and only the researchers will know you participated in this study.
- Interviews will last approximately 45-60 minutes and be conducted via zoom.

COMPENSATION WILL BE PROVIDED

$40 gift card for an initial interview
$40 gift card if selected for a follow-up interview

SCAN FOR, SIGNUP, WEBSITE, SURVEY ACCESS

COMPLETED INTERVIEWS

State	Expungement–eligible individuals	Community/govt. representatives	Total
California	23	28	51
New Jersey	20 + 2	10	32
Pennsylvania	24 + 1	15	40
Utah	43 + 5	11	59
Other states	0	5	5
Total	110 + 8	69	187

FINDINGS

THE
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CLEAN SLATE PASSAGE: KEY ELEMENTS

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Broad Coalition

Bipartisan sponsorship
Law enforcement
Business
Community orgs

Issue Framing

Appeal to shared values:
Employment
Family
Housing
Second chances

JOB

Powerful Storytelling

Compelling personal narratives
Data + statistics
Research

Policy Entrepreneur

Strong leader
Highly knowledgeable
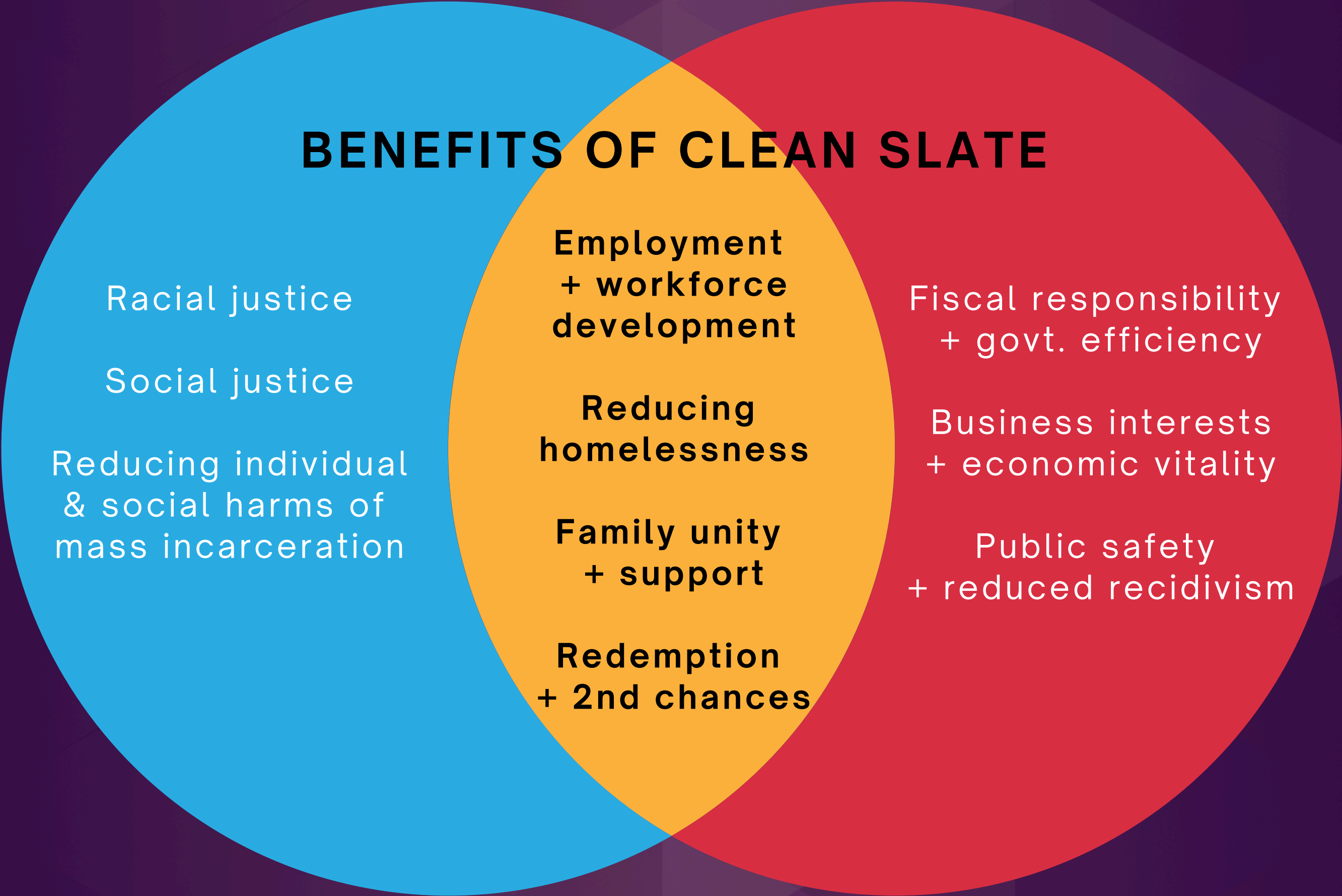Well-connected
Deeply invested
Persistent

BROAD COALITIONS

This is a Republican issue. This is a Democrat issue. This is a libertarian issue. This is an independent issue. This is an issue if you want to incentivize smarter policy on you know, rising crime rates. If you want to address workforce shortages, if you want to approach it from the humanitarian standpoint, just believing in people and providing those second chances. **This is everyone's issue...** So **this is not a partisan issue by any means**... my advice would be **build the most robust, diverse coalition, and make that coalition well known** through press releases, op eds. Showing the diversity of the coalition is going to help change hearts and minds.

– Conservative community organization representative, PA

[O]ne of the things that was critical was **having a really extensive coalition of support. There were groups like the ACLU working on it, but... maybe even more importantly, prosecutors sitting at the table... the pro law enforcement side of things.** The **courts** were an integral part, because of course, they were the ones that had to do the implementation and bear the costs... [W]e had some more **conservative leaning organizations**, groups, like... the Libertas Institute, which is sort of a libertarian think tank. Americans for Prosperity... that really was critical in getting the support, especially in a red state... [T]iming was critical too. This was passed at a time when we were really seeing a lot of interest... on the right and [in] conservative states to be smarter about the way that they dealt with criminal justice issues, rather than this tough on crime approach.

– Progressive community organization representative, UT

ISSUE FRAMING

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BENEFITS OF CLEAN SLATE

Racial justice

Social justice

Reducing individual & social harms of mass incarceration

Employment + workforce development

Reducing homelessness

Family unity + support

Redemption + 2nd chances

Fiscal responsibility + govt. efficiency

Business interests + economic vitality

Public safety + reduced recidivism

ISSUE FRAMING: EMPLOYMENT

We ran this as a workforce bill. It wasn't a criminal justice reform bill, it was about strengthening our workforce, Utah's one of the best economies in the nation, but **people weren't able to get jobs because of records. Employers wanted to hire them. And employers are worried about liability and if we can get rid of records than we can create jobs for people.** That's good for people, it's good for workers. And so **having the Chamber's enthusiastic support, I think went a long way. And we were able to tell the story about how this is not only good for people, it's good for public safety, but it's good for business.** And in a Republican state, if you can **talk about the benefits to the economy, the benefits to employers, the ability to attract other employers to come to the state and have this workforce available for them.** People saw Clean Slate as a way to achieve those goals.

– **Clean Slate advocate, UT**

[F]or legislators who are of a very conservative mindset, who would say, "Well, why would we ever try and, you know, facilitate a benefit to somebody who's posed a risk to public safety and was a law breaker?" I think **they see the benefits in terms of an employable group of people who contribute productively to the tax base in the cities that they live in, who can provide for their families without having to lean on public services and other publicly available benefits because we can lift themselves out of those situations by improving both their their employment and in their housing.** And that sort of **upward mobility and get yourself up by your bootstraps and making available opportunities** along those lines really appeals to that political mindset. And on the same token, for those who are very liberally minded and think, Well, we want to provide every opportunity for the individual to self–actualize and be self determinative, it appeals to them, so I think there are things about this that make it attractive in both instances. I will tell you, my confidence level about this sort of thing passing if it didn't have housing and employment related issues... My confidence level would be like rock bottom, because I think **it's the housing and employment part of it that really appeals to the Republican legislators** in Utah.

– **Government official, UT**

[W]e had a hearing... [a woman] testified... she was very, very courageous... **[S]he had a drug conviction from when she was 19 years old. This woman was in her 50s... She works in human resources. Every time she went for a new job, this felony came up**. And she had to explain that she was an addict, and that she got caught. And that she has cleaned up her life. **She has a family, grandchildren, she has two master's degrees, she is a professional person. But this felony keeps haunting her.** And if you really think about it, if she tries to go into a senior home when she's in her 80s? Some senior homes don't allow anyone who has a felony record. So look at the people it impacts. ..[S]ome of the hardest workers that we know... are people with records who are given a second chance... they appreciate the opportunity, and they work their butts off. But in some cases with zero tolerance, with a felony, it could be for a low level drug carry... do you think they're gonna go do that tomorrow? No. Right? And what does that have to do with HR? .. [T]hat is honestly what changed my mind.

– Conservative state legislator, PA

Once I got the first expungement, I was able to get a huge promotion... I got a new position and a new promotion. I was able to save money. Because I was making more money. I was able to save money. And **I'm now a homeowner. I own the car, I drive. I don't have a car payment. I'm financially stable. I have a great job. And all these things wouldn't never happened if I wasn't able to get my expungement**.

– "Crystal," 46, Latina/White, Utah

POLICY ENTREPRENEURS

I wouldn't discount also just the amazing advocacy efforts of some of the stakeholders.. I mean, **some people who are truly committed to an idea and who are willing to put in the elbow grease and the grunt work, to have the meetings and get people around tables, talking and exploring ideas and mobilizing legislators**. And I mean, that's a huge lift. And, quite frankly, **I don't think this would have happened if you hadn't had a personality like Noella Sudbury kind of really pushing to see it happen.**

– Government official, UT

If you know that woman, you know she's going to get it done... She's just such a passionate person to be able to be behind this type of cause, like she truly genuinely cares about helping people get their lives back... it's been a huge factor as to why Utah's moving so far along.

– Clean Slate advocate, UT

I would say that the lead and really the catalyst was an organization based in Philadelphia called Community Legal Services. And one of their leaders, her name is **Sharon Dietrich... she's sort of like the godmother of Clean Slate here in Pennsylvania and probably nationally.**
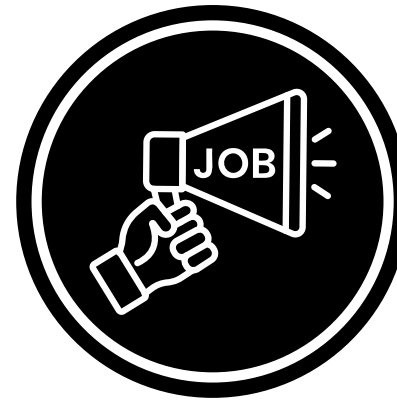
– Business community leader, PA

Most important thing is **find yourself a Sharon. It really was a difference maker**, because she knew exactly the capabilities of the database that we were trying to leverage for this... **[E]very single time we have one of these negotiations, and they either push back, or they said they couldn't do something, they said they didn't have that information, she already knew when she could call them out...** [T]hey said, "We can't do that", she said "yes, you actually can and here's how," because **she just knew all those ins and outs... The states that have tried to do clean slate and have failed**, have done so for a variety of reasons. But I've frequently seen **it was because they did not have somebody that had that level of knowledge. So that's the number one most important thing.**

– Conservative community organization representative, PA

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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESSFUL POLICY CHANGE

- **Create broad + inclusive coalitions**
- Engage potential adversaries early
- Include law enforcement, business, community members

- **Frame the issue around shared values**
- Employment, work + economic opportunity/vitality
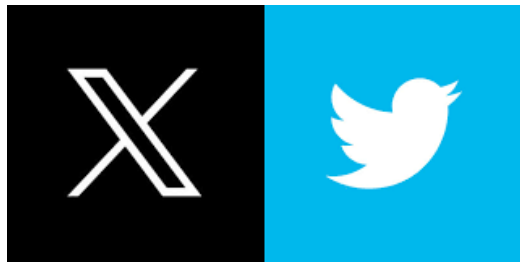- Housing, family, second chances

- **Tell compelling stories**
- Use powerful personal testimonies
- Provide supporting data + evidence

- **Identify + activate policy entrepreneurs** with deep knowledge + broad networks

THANK YOU!

Our project website:

Contact Elsa Chen:

@CleanSlateStudy

@RecordClearanceResearch

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