The Washington State juvenile justice system is founded upon the core principle of rehabilitation. Society benefits when rehabilitated youth reintegrate into society and become law-abiding and contributing members of their communities. A major barrier to reintegration is the widespread dissemination and easy public access to juvenile court records in our state.

**Washington’s Current Policies Prevent Youth From Reintegrating into Society**

- Having a public juvenile offense record can prevent youth from obtaining education, employment, and housing - leading to a cycle of poverty, homelessness, and crime.
- In Washington, court records of any alleged juvenile offense are open to the public and disseminated online - even if the charges were dismissed.
- Washington is one of only eight states where juvenile records are open and published online. As a result, Washington’s youth are at a disadvantage compared to youth from other states.
- A youth can petition the court to have his or her record sealed, but the process is costly, lengthy, and difficult to navigate without an attorney. Furthermore, once a record has been put online, it can never truly be sealed.
- Our current records policies have a discriminatory impact on minority youth.

**The Youth Opportunities Act Will Diminish this Barrier to Success, While Promoting Public Safety By:**

- Prohibiting courts from disseminating, selling, or making public juvenile offense records, **EXCEPT** for the records of a youth that was convicted of a serious violent offense.
- Prohibiting private individuals and entities from accessing juvenile offense records, while allowing access by courts, prosecutors, and law enforcement.
- Maintaining the openness of juvenile court proceedings.

**The Youth Opportunities Act Will Give Our State’s Youth a Chance at Success**

- It allows youth to pursue educational, employment, and other opportunities without being shackled by childhood mistakes.
- It benefits society by promoting employment amongst Washington’s youth, enabling them to contribute to the economy.

*Name changed to protect anonymity*