COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES & PUBLIC SAFETY

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INTRODUCTION

In the United States, individuals with criminal records[1] are subject to a host of federal and state imposed civil sanctions, restrictions, and disqualifications. These legal barriers—known as collateral consequences of criminal conviction—can occur for a permanent, indefinite, or time-limited period post-conviction and are expansive in scope. Restrictions include impeding an individual's ability to secure public or private housing, access SNAP benefits, engage civically as a voter or jury member, gain meaningful employment, or obtain a driver's license (National Inventory of the Collateral Consequences of Conviction, n.d.).[2] Given the variety of collateral consequences, there is not a consensus among legal scholars and practitioners about the purpose of such restrictions, although legislation sometimes requires a public safety justification to impose them (Love & Schlussel 2020).

However, in practice these restrictions can also interact and accumulate in ways that are counterproductive to public safety (Uggen & Stewart, 2014; United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2019). For example, housing restrictions and instability can impede the ability to find work; in turn, the inability to earn income can make securing stable housing more difficult, creating a self-perpetuating cycle (Couloute, 2018; Geller & Curtis, 2011; Western, 2018). Other institutional financial penalties can also interact with and exacerbate collateral consequences. Criminal justice system fines and fees that accumulate post-conviction can further contribute to economic and housing instability (Pattillo et al., 2022) and wage garnishments can disincentivize people from participating in the formal labor market post-release (Haney, 2018; Haney & Mercier, 2021). Barriers can readily become layered, integrated, and complex.

Many collateral consequences are triggered automatically post-conviction, but roughly one-third are imposed at the discretion of a decision maker, such as a potential landlord or employer, who can legally disqualify applicants based on a criminal record (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2019). Formal decision makers—and specifically those charged with employment decisions—are the focus of the current discussion paper. This group is placed in the difficult position of balancing two potentially conflicting public safety demands: integrating people with conviction records into the workforce while also ensuring a safe environment for customers and employees.

Employers routinely conduct criminal background checks to balance these public safety concerns.[3] While decision makers are discouraged from "blanket banning" people with criminal convictions, federal and state guidance on how to best determine future risk is limited. The benefits of reintegrating an individual with a criminal record into the workforce are not equally shared by society and employers, and employers are not adequately incentivized to hire potentially "riskier" applicants (Bushway & Kalra, 2021). In practice, employers call back job applicants with felony or misdemeanor conviction records less frequently than applicants without criminal records (Agan & Starr, 2017; Pager,

2003; Uggen et al., 2014). As a result, some individuals who have desisted and do not pose a public safety threat—and for whom the benefits of stable employment might be the greatest—may be overlooked. While not everyone with a conviction record experiences employment and recidivism benefits from a job opportunity, identifying this important subset of applicants can improve outcomes for prospective job applicants with convictions, the employers that hire them, and their broader communities.

This discussion paper synthesizes existing evidence on four connected topics surrounding criminal record employment barriers and public safety implications. The first three sections review the relationship between employment and recidivism, employer concerns, and how criminal background assessments are—and can be—used. These issues inform the fourth section on current large-scale reform efforts designed to improve employment decision processes. Rather than revising or reversing the broader existing restrictions and consequences in place, reform efforts tend to either provide limited protections for employers that hire this population or alter how and when decision makers receive information about applicants with a prior criminal record by delaying, concealing, and supplementing criminal record information— all of which have limitations in practice. The final section concludes with a summary and set of key takeaways.

EVIDENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT AND RECIDIVISM

Various theoretical perspectives posit employment reduces recidivism,[4] and an extensive set of studies indicates that formerly incarcerated individuals who secure employment post-release experience improved recidivism outcomes compared to those who do not (e.g. Apel & Horney, 2017; Berg & Huebner, 2011; Van der Geest, Bijleveld & Blokland, 2011). However, studies evaluating the impact of post-release job programs have found the relationship between these programs and recidivism to be less straightforward. A meta-analysis of eight studies that implemented random assignment to assess the impact of employment programs, most of which were administered to people recently released from prison, did not find meaningful recidivism reduction effects (Visher, Winterfield, & Coggeshall, 2005). Research on transitional jobs training programs, which provide immediate, temporary employment post-release to foster positive work-related behaviors, has produced promising but inconsistent findings regarding the effect of these programs on recidivism (see e.g., Jacobs, 2012; Redcross et al., 2012; Valentine & Redcross, 2015). Even when program participants do experience reductions in rates of recidivism, it is difficult to discern the underlying reasons for this change (Bushway & Apel, 2012; Zweig, Yahner, & Redcross, 2010). For example, evidence suggesting that employment-focused reentry programming has limited or nonconsequential impact on overall employment levels and earnings suggest that the suite of wrap-around services offered as part of these programs may be driving recidivism outcomes rather than employment (e.g., Cook et al., 2015; Redcross et al., 2010).

The policy challenge is that individuals with conviction records are part of a heterogenous group, and do not all respond similarly to interventions. Those actively returning home from prison have heightened needs, and programs that target

risk factors and provide skill development may be highly beneficial, but also might not produce the desired reductions in recidivism. Instead, employment opportunities may have more notable recidivism reduction effects for individuals who have already started engaging in the desistance[5] process (or are on the edge of desistance and could either abandon or continue with criminal behavior).

Evidence of motivation[6] may be one way to identify people who are in the process of desisting. Denver, Siwach and Bushway (2017) find significant reductions in recidivism for people who successfully passed a criminal background check among a group of active job seekers. Passing multiple decision layers (which included the decision to seek out work, the employer's initial positive decision, and the state's approval in the background check stage) is one way to assess potential motivation. In that study context, the sample included a group of people who were initially denied and opted to submit evidence of rehabilitation in an attempt to overturn that denial (or "contest" the initial denial). In an extension to the 2017 study, Siwach (2018) explored the sample subgroups in more detail and found that those who contested but were not cleared to work in the second decision round still had levels of recidivism more comparable to those who were cleared to work (either initially or ultimately) than those who never contested a denial. In other words, persistence in the labor market may be another potential indicator of motivation. Focusing on a group of men incarcerated in Nebraska, Apel and Horney (2017) find that improvements in self-reported commitment to a job, rather than work characteristics or measures of job quality, reduces offending—a third potential measure of motivation. Motivation could also be connected to other factors, such as age and maturation. For example, in a sub-analysis of the National Supported Work Demonstration Project, a major experimental employment program, Uggen (2000) found that employment is related to a reduction in recidivism for those 27 years old and older, whereas employment showed no significant effect for those under age 27. These patterns align with a key takeaway from the risk-needs-responsivity literature: to be effective, programs need to target the right group of people at the right time (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006; Latessa, 2012).

EMPLOYER CONCERNS ABOUT HIRING THIS POPULATION AND RELATED EVIDENCE

Evidence of previous involvement in illegal activities can be a "negative credential" that is difficult to offset (Pager, 2007), and there are several key employer concerns regarding hiring individuals with criminal records that researchers routinely document. A major consideration is "repetition risk," or an expectation that prior illegal behavior is indicative of similar future behavior (Sugie et al., 2020). The risk of repeated illegal behavior may have several costs for employers, which could range from replacing workers involved in the criminal justice system to being held legally liable if an employee commits a workplace-related crime. A 2021 survey found that 36% of human resource professionals believe that organizations are "very" concerned about legal liability when hiring individuals with criminal records (SHRM, 2021; see also Lageson et al., 2015), although employer filings for liability and negligence claims appear to be rare in practice (Bushway & Kalra, 2021).

Given reported liability concerns, employers also indicate being more receptive to hiring individuals with criminal records when offered insurance and financial incentives (Cullen et al., 2021; Hunt et al., 2018). However, employers do not appear to widely take advantage of existing federal incentives that may mitigate the risk of being held liable for employee misconduct. For example, the Federal Bonding Program, which provides short-term, free fidelity bond insurance (up to $5,000 to cover employee fraud, theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement), is a long-standing federal initiative devoted to reducing the risk posed to employers by hiring hard-to-employ populations. However, this program is rarely used in practice and employers are often unaware of the program's existence (Bloom, 2006; Holzer et al., 2003; Martin et al., 2020). The Work Opportunity Tax Credit, another incentive for employers to hire from hard-to-employ populations, also appears promising. However, many employers are unaware of this tax incentive (Hunt et al., 2018) and few people take advantage of the credit (Bushway & Kalra, 2021). Beyond repetition risk and liability concerns, employment decision makers also react negatively to the stigma associated with a criminal record (Sugie et al., 2020), which can be more challenging to address through policy.[7]

In addition to concerns about negative employee behaviors or workplace crime, other characteristics, such as a lack of worker skills or low employee quality, are often perceived to be related to the criminal record. Some employers assume previously incarcerated applicants have underdeveloped or depreciated "soft-skills" that are necessary for optimal job performance (e.g., Pager, 2007). Despite these concerns, studies examining performance on the job—which can cover a range of behavioral and worker skill indicators—have found promising evidence for hiring this population. Some employees with criminal records seem to have comparable or even lower rates of turnover and faster promotion rates than employees without records (Lundquist et al., 2018; Minor et al., 2018; see also Paulk 2016 for descriptive results). However, in some job positions researchers also found higher levels of misconduct[8] in the workplace, which led Minor and colleagues (2018) to suggest the characteristics of the work environment (and not just the criminal conviction status) may play an influential role in problematic behaviors.

Employer perceptions may also be shifting. A recent study found 81% of HR professionals and 74% of business leaders reported that workers with criminal records are of the same quality as workers without criminal records, up from 67% and down from 81% respectively in 2018 (SHRM, 2021). Employers are also increasingly publicly promoting the benefits of hiring this population (Korzenik, 2021). Similarly, there are changing trends in occupational licensing restrictions, which bar workers from criminal records from obtaining—either permanently or conditionally—licenses required to perform certain occupations or trades. For example, licensing restrictions historically used criminal history to assess an applicant's "moral character," a term that broadly links assumptions about character, risk, and worker quality. However, this requirement has been declining in recent years, with legislators favoring more objective and transparent decision criteria as a replacement (Love & Schlussel, 2020).

THE CURRENT STATE OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND ASSESSMENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES

Criminal records are not protected under privacy rights in the United States, and in the age of the internet they are more easily accessible than ever. However, due to our fragmented data systems, employers often receive incomplete, inaccurate, and complicated criminal record information that is inconsistent across sources (Jacobs, 2015; Lageson, 2020). Furthermore, 41 states allow for public disclosure of arrest records, generating an estimated 10 million digital arrest records every year (Lageson, 2020). In the digital era, online records can create "permanent stigma" and alter employment prospects before an individual has been formally convicted of a crime[9] or after a charge is dismissed (Lageson & Maruna, 2018: 126).

While private employer discretion makes it difficult to know the extent of employment barriers, there is growing agreement across the political spectrum that the vast array of occupational licensing restrictions is excessive (Carpenter et al., 2017; Charles Koch Institute, 2019; Kleiner, 2015). While excluding individuals with criminal records from some licensed occupations is squarely in the public interest, many are seemingly arbitrary. Licensing restrictions have implications for employment and earnings more broadly (Kleiner & Krueger 2013), and recent research suggests criminal background check policies with a list of offense-specific mandatory disqualification rules in addition to risk factor guidelines can have disparate impacts on racial minorities (Siwach et al., 2017). Furthermore, policies with strict and untested disqualifying restrictions can lead to poorer risk predictions and encourage employers to disqualify candidates who do not pose an unreasonable risk to public safety (Denver & Behlendorf, 2021; Siwach et al., 2017). For example, Denver & Behlendorf (2021) projected how many people with New York State conviction records would be disqualified to work in certain high security positions in the aviation sector under current policy and proposed legislative changes (both of which are publicly available decision rules). Looking at a large state sample (all individuals whose first in-state adult arrest was between 1990 and 2005), they found that only about half of the convictions currently listed in the disqualifying criteria were correlated with higher recidivism rates compared to non-disqualifying offenses, suggesting an overreach in current policy. While 20% of the sample would be disqualified from employment in this sector based on the current exclusion list, this estimate would double under proposed policy extensions. Conversely, narrowing down the current list would reduce exclusions by almost 20% without an increased risk to public safety (Denver & Behlendorf, 2021).

Risk assessment instruments within the criminal justice system are widespread (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006; Taxman & Dezember, 2017), but employers' risk instruments and decision rules are generally not available for review or evaluation (Siwach & Bushway, 2017). As a result, we know much less about risk tools and best practices in this setting. While some organizations use standardized internal hiring practices, others rely on discretionary and less consistent decision processes (Lageson et al., 2015). Directly applying existing tools in the criminal justice system to the employment context would also be problematic given the different goals and data access available to employers (Siwach & Bushway, 2017). Some experts who warn that adopting criminal justice risk assessment instruments for hiring decisions without modification would be a "serious mistake" (Siwach & Bushway, 2017: 306) are currently working towards the development of validated screening tools that take federal employment guidance, contextual differences, and criminological evidence into account (Bushway et al., 2022).

Researchers and policymakers have pointed to several key factors that can assist employment decision makers in the assessment process. First, most people who acquire a conviction record or are incarcerated are not subsequently reconvicted or reincarcerated (Bushway et al., 2022; Rhodes et al., 2014). Second, old criminal records are generally not predictive of future recidivism. Researchers estimate that after an average of 7-10 years have passed without acquiring an additional criminal record, people with prior records have a comparable likelihood of recidivism as those without criminal records (Blumstein & Nakamura, 2009; Kurlychek et al., 2006, 2007). Third, additional information, including the type of offense (Blumstein & Nakamura, 2009), age at last conviction, and number of prior convictions (Bushway, Nieuwbeerta, & Blokland, 2011), can inform risk predictions. Fourth, federal employment guidance recommends, in addition to the factors already described, that employers consider evidence of rehabilitation and information about the circumstances surrounding an applicant's offense(s) (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2012). However, it is important to note that it can be challenging for employers to identify the most predictive types of evidence of rehabilitation, which can make it difficult to improve decision accuracy when using such information (Denver, 2020). In addition, by definition individualized assessments are not intended to standardize assessment criteria across applicants, which can create other concerns (e.g., Lageson et al., 2015). Yet the act of submitting evidence of rehabilitation, which can involve a sizable amount of time and effort for applicants to compile, can in itself be a useful signal of motivation or desistance from crime (Bushway & Apel, 2012; Denver, 2020).

CURRENT REFORM STRATEGIES AND AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

There are several proposed alternatives to current criminal background check processes and exclusion policies. One major category of reforms involves adjusting how and when employers assess information about a criminal record. The most popular policy reform idea in this area is Ban the Box (BTB), which involves *delaying criminal record information* to appear later in the process (rather than asking upfront on job applications). Supporters of BTB believe that obliging employers to assess candidates based on their qualifications prior to learning of their criminal record history will result in better hiring outcomes for this population (National Employment Law Project, 2019). This underlying assumption is only partially supported by evidence; while BTB laws have been found to improve access to employment in the public sector (see Raphael, 2021 for an overview), there is growing evidence of discrimination against Black applicants after BTB policies take effect (Agan & Starr, 2018; Doleac & Hansen, 2020). The concern is that if employers are interested in criminal record information but unable to access it upfront, they may "statistically discriminate" and make assumptions about which applicants have records based on demographic characteristics—with a specific focus on black men (see also Bushway, 2004; Holzer et al., 2006). In other cases, employers may simply be unaware of a BTB policy change or choose to ignore it. For example, Schneider et al. (2021) compared applications from the same set of employers in Minnesota before and after BTB took effect. They found that around 20% of employers are not compliant and employers generally retained similar hiring attitudes and processes in the post-BTB period.

Another information-adjustment strategy involves *concealing criminal record information* through sealing or expungement.[10] Unlike BTB, which temporarily restricts access to criminal records on the employer's end, concealment is intended to permanently alter the existence or visibility of the criminal record. Rather than providing a chance for the job applicant to offset the criminal record that will be discovered later, applicants with only one eligible conviction under this strategy would (at least in theory) look like they do not have a past conviction. However, concealment can be challenging to both study[11] and successfully implement in practice. One limitation is that uptake rates (or the use of these policies among those eligible) tends to be low (Chien, 2020; Prescott & Starr, 2020). In addition, while criminal record agencies are charged with creating criminal records, the dissemination of such records is a largely unregulated process. As a result, public and private companies are able to easily recirculate mug shots and other types of records, which can make tracking and containing record distribution challenging (Lageson, 2020). Some legal scholars argue that a concealment strategy "ignores the technological realities of the information age" (Love, 2003: 1726).

A third information-adjustment strategy focuses not on delaying or concealing negative information, but on *emphasizing positive information to supplement the criminal record*. Under this policy strategy, employers could opt to incorporate information about time spent in the community into employment criminal background checks to avoid overestimating the risk of recidivism (Bushway et al., 2022). Another option is for employers to encourage applicants with conviction records to submit evidence of rehabilitation, either with the application or as part of a two-stage decision process after a criminal record raises a concern (e.g., Kurlychek et al., 2019). Regardless of how this additional

information is transferred, enabling people to opt to include positive credentials could send a useful signal to the employer (Denver, 2020).

Experimental survey evidence and qualitative analyses of judicial decisions in occupational licensing decisions suggests positive reference letters—especially from a prior employer—can be particularly influential documents. However, other forms of evidence, such as involuntary jobs training programs or other court-mandated activities, do not appear to sway decision makers (Denver & Ewald, 2018; DeWitt & Denver, 2020). When considering state-issued certificates that verify a person's employability or rehabilitation—which in theory should be a powerful signal of desistance (Bushway & Apel, 2012)—researchers have found mixed results. Peter Leasure has extensively examined the effect of Ohio's Certificates of Qualification for Employment (CQEs) on employer callback rates across a series of correspondence audit studies. While CQEs do not appear to be effective for hypothetical female applicants (Leasure & Zhang, 2020), they do improve employment callback likelihood for men (Leasure & Anderson, 2016). However, a later study painted a more nuanced picture of the effect of CQEs for male applicants. Leasure and Anderson (2020) found white male applicants with a recent felony and CQE were significantly more likely to receive a callback than otherwise identical white male applicants with a recent felony record—and even had comparable callback rates to white male applicants without records. However, the same pattern did not hold for black male applicants. Instead, callback rates for black applicants with a recent felony and CQE were statistically indistinguishable from those with the same felony record but no CQE (Leasure & Anderson, 2020). A CQE also does not appear to mitigate criminal record stigma when a hypothetical applicant has more than one conviction record (Leasure, 2019).

More broadly, some researchers recommend a larger structural change to who (or which entities) control the decision process, which can have implications for information management. Bushway and Kalra (2021) propose a centralized state decision maker that could provide standardization, build in record accuracy checks, and indemnify employers against negligent hiring claims. While this type of system already exists in certain industries and in occupational licensing (e.g., Kurlychek et al., 2019), this could also be costly to implement on a large scale.

SUMMARY AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

While collateral consequences can overlap across different social and economic domains, a key policy question in this paper is whether employment restrictions and exclusions for individuals with criminal records improve or reduce public safety. Opportunities to work do not uniformly improve levels of employment or recidivism for all individuals with criminal records (Bushway & Apel, 2012; Visher et al., 2005), and decision makers are working under uncertainty when making criminal background check assessments. However, job opportunities can also have meaningful impacts on desistance trajectories (e.g., Uggen, 2000), and exclusions from criminal background checks can increase recidivism levels for people on the edge of desistance (Denver et al., 2017). Based on existing empirical evidence, there are three key takeaways:

- **The population of individuals with criminal records is a large and heterogeneous group. People with criminal records do not pose an equal or infinite risk to public safety, and can experience recidivism reductions from employment opportunities.**
Most people with a conviction or incarceration record do not recidivate (Bushway et al., 2022; Rhodes et al., 2014), and people with older criminal records do not pose a greater risk on average than the general population (Kurlychek et al., 2006, 2007). While not everyone with a criminal record benefits from job opportunities or is a good fit for all job types, older individuals, people actively seeking a job who are cleared to work (or those persistently seeking work when faced with denials), and those with high levels of job commitment can experience reductions in recidivism (Apel & Horney, 2017; Denver et al., 2017; Siwach, 2018; Uggen, 2000).

- **Given this heterogeneity, barriers restricting employment opportunities can have adverse effects on public safety while narrowly focused policy restrictions can improve decision practices without public safety trade-offs.**
The system of collateral consequences in the United States is large and messy. Decision-maker discretion and differences in regulatory codes across jurisdictions makes understanding the impact of collateral consequences difficult for returning citizens, regulators and researchers alike.[12] There is growing agreement in research and policy circles, including bipartisan support, that there are too many consequences in general (e.g., Uggen & Stewart 2014) and excessive employment and occupational licensing requirements (Carpenter et al., 2017; Charles Koch Institute, 2019; Kleiner, 2015) without clear or meaningful public safety benefits. Narrowing conviction disqualification lists to only the set deemed necessary for public safety can improve employment opportunities without an added cost (Denver & Behlendorf, 2021).

- **Policies that delay, conceal, and supplement criminal record information to improve employment outcomes all have limitations.**
Recognizing that employers often seek criminal history information to make hiring decisions,[13] some reform efforts have focused on adjusting when and how information about convictions or mitigating circumstances is used. While well-intentioned, each strategy has limitations and sometimes unintended consequences in practice. Moving forward, strong researcher/employer relationships are needed to further examine criminal background check strategies, workplace crime incidents and mitigation options, and other options for balancing public safety with employment opportunities for individuals with criminal records.

ENDNOTES

1 Different terms have been used to describe people impacted by collateral consequences. Here, we often use the broad term "individuals with criminal records" to be inclusive of the many ways people can be impacted by different parts of the criminal justice system (see, e.g., Lageson [2020] on the long-term and intractable consequences of mug shots), but we sometimes refer more narrowly to conviction records.

2 See also Love (2020) for a state-by-state comparison of policy restrictions for using criminal records in employment, licensing, and housing decisions.

3 A 2012 survey of human resources professionals found 86% of employers reported conducting some type of criminal background checks on all or select job candidates, and the majority (62%) reported conducting the check after a contingent job offer (SHRM, 2012). A nationally representative survey of the public similarly found that more than 70% of respondents who applied for a job within the past year (at the time of the survey) reported going through a criminal background check (Denver et al., 2018).

4 Theoretical mechanisms include shifts in benefits and costs for rational decision makers (Becker, 1968), developing an important form of social control (Laub & Sampson, 2001), positive changes in routine activities (Apel & Horney, 2017), and adopting prosocial identities (Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph, 2002; Rumgay, 2004).

5   The term desistance is widely debated (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Maruna, 2001) but is used here to describe the process of reduced engagement in offending.

6   "Motivation" may not be the most comprehensive term, but is used here to describe the overarching idea that people are ready and able to seek (and maintain) employment. Motivation can include self-selection processes such as engaging in a work program or proactively applying for a job (Bushway & Reuter 2001; Denver et al., 2017), commitment to the work (Apel & Horney, 2017), and persistence when faced with rejection (Siwach, 2018). People face a host of reentry challenges, especially immediately upon release, which can make seriously pursuing employment difficult (Solomon, 2012). The broader status of the labor market at the time of the job search can also play a role in lowering recidivism rates (Schnepel, 2018; Yang, 2017) and might influence the motivation to seek out work. Therefore, the ability to embody "motivated" behavior may be influenced by structural barriers and conditions that can include, but are not limited to, job access.

7   Sugie and colleagues (2020) point to Fair Chance Hiring laws (often referred to as Ban the Box) as a potential remedy, but see the later discussion in the current paper on the challenges with these policies in practice.

8   Misconduct could include a range of activities, including repeatedly missing work or using profanity. The authors suggest "primary employer losses from misconduct are probably more pedestrian" than typically assumed (Minor et al., 2018: 32). Still, in lieu of access to linked data that connects arrests to workplace events, misbehavior in the workplace might be the closest measure of "repetition risk."

9   While federal guidance strongly promotes the use of conviction records, the guidance states "an employer may make an employment decision based on the conduct underlying an arrest if the conduct makes the individual unfit for the position in question" (EEOC, 2012: Summary).

10 While the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, sealing refers to prohibiting employers (along with other non-criminal justice system entities) from viewing the sealed record. Expungement goes a step further by destroying the existence of the record from everyone (including criminal justice system actors). People that accumulate multiple criminal records can have partially or fully sealed or expunged records, but there are restrictions on which types of records are eligible for these concealment remedies.

11 See Prescott and Starr (2020) for one of the few studies in this area. While they find that people who had their records sealed or expunged in Michigan had low subsequent rearrest and reconviction rates and improved wages, they were only able to track people before and after they acquired a record (without a control group).

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