



October 19, 2020

Support the Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Again Act, H.R. 8560

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your representative and ask him or her to cosponsor the Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Again Act, H.R. 8560. Introduced by Reps. Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) and Van Taylor (R-Texas), the Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Again Act would eliminate the age requirement for an individual seeking to have his or her record expunged for a first-time drug offense.

A record [can be a barrier for individuals](#) convicted of even simple drug possession offenses, prohibiting them from getting access to a job, an education, or even a place to live. These collateral consequences can lead to higher recidivism rates, and thus higher crime rates.

Several states -- including Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Utah -- have enacted legislation to allow individuals with certain misdemeanor and/or minor felony offenses to seal or and/or expunge records. At the federal level, the [eligibility for expungement is currently incredibly limited](#). The Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Again Act would help to remedy this.

Under current law, 18 U.S.C. 3607, an individual under the age of 21 can seek expungement of a first time simple drug possession offense, 21 U.S.C 844. The Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Again Act would eliminate the age requirement, allow individuals of any age to seek expungement of a simple drug possession offense.

FreedomWorks strongly supported the First Step Act which, signed into law in December 2018, brought long-needed sentencing reforms coupled with evidence-based recidivism reduction programming to federal prisons. However, we recognized at the time that so much more needed to be done to give those with a criminal record the ability to have a second chance.

One of the best ways to reduce recidivism is a job. Even a simple drug possession offense can prevent an individual from getting a job and becoming a productive member of society. The Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Again Act is another step toward the goal of improving our

criminal justice system and providing those who have been punished to have a real opportunity of redemption.

For these reasons, I urge you to contact your representative and ask him or her to cosponsor the Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Act, H.R. 8560.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks