



**Testimony** Dave Melton; Community Outreach Coordinator, GNY LECET  
**Hearing** Public Protections Budget Hearing  
**Topic** FY23 Executive Budget Clean Slate Legislation (PPGG, Part AA)  
**Date** January 25, 2022

Hello, my name is Dave Melton. I'm the Community Outreach Coordinator for the Greater New York Laborers-Employers Cooperation & Education Trust (GNY LECET) and a proud member of Laborers Local 79. I'm here today on behalf of 17,000 hardworking members and 1,500 signatory contractors of the Mason Tenders District Council of Greater New York to testify in support of the Clean Slate legislation.

Before joining the union, I was affected by the criminal justice system. When I was released and returned home I struggled to find employment – a major requirement of my release. Eventually I was able to find work as a bike messenger and later a supermarket but the employment options continued to be very limited because of my past conviction and involvement in the justice system. I was often exploited at these jobs because of my record but I couldn't risk losing my employment and violating parole.

My life changed once I learned about Local 79 and joined the union. Local 79 gave me a second chance - a clean slate – and that's something every New Yorker deserves. Most often a person's past dictates their future when you've been involved in the criminal justice system and that keeps people in a cycle of recidivism. Construction is different though. Your past doesn't dictate your future in my industry and can provide lifechanging career opportunities like I've had.

That's why I'm here today to testify about the Clean Slate legislation. This legislation will give New Yorkers an opportunity like I had, an opportunity to have your past not dictate your future – and for many, the future of their family.

GNY LECET appreciates Governor Hochul's inclusion of Clean Slate in the FY2023 Executive Budget and support for the key principles of the policy: strengthened communities, increased economic growth and enhanced public safety. However, the language proposed in the Executive Budget will weaken the existing bill by delaying when an individual becomes eligible for conviction sealing, and thus preventing them from moving forward with their lives.

I personally know the impact a delay like this can have on a person's life. If I hadn't found the Local 79 apprenticeship program and joined the union, my life's trajectory could've been very different. Nothing was sealed for me and they didn't care about my past, but a majority of employers do. If we fail to count a person's time in the community while supervised on parole or probation towards the waiting period for a clean slate, their trajectory will be significantly altered.



Again, GNY LECET appreciates the Governor including this lifechanging policy in her FY23 Executive Budget. We look forward to working with the Governor and legislators to pass Clean Slate legislation that accomplishes our shared goal of ending perpetual punishment for every New Yorker.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.