

**SAMPLE LETTER # 1**

**PERSONAL—HOW MY RECORD IS STILL A BARRIER**

*(fill in the blanks with your personal experience)*

Georgia can do more to give people with an past criminal record a second chance. It's been \_\_\_\_ years since I was convicted of \_\_\_\_\_. I'm not the same person as I was back then, but I continue to be treated as a second class citizen years later. I've paid my debt to society, but my past still holds me back. I'm not a threat, but no one will hire me. Georgia lags behind when it comes to giving individuals like me a second chance. Forty other states – 40 – have a better track record than Georgia does. They don't punish a person forever for past mistakes--they allow certain convictions to come off an individual's record after a period of time. But Georgia's expungement law is too restrictive – one of the harshest in the country – so my past follows me forever. Georgia's law makes it hard for me and the other 4.2 million people with a Georgia criminal record who want to work, rebuild our lives and provide better futures for ourselves and our families. It's time for Georgia to expand expungement and get thousands of people back to work. Please help by spreading the word about this critical need for a change in Georgia law. Go to [SecondChanceGeorgia.org](http://SecondChanceGeorgia.org) to learn more.

**Source:** 4.2 million figure: Georgia Bureau of Investigation/Georgia Crime Information Center- Cheryl Payton [Cheryl.Payton@gbi.ga.gov](mailto:Cheryl.Payton@gbi.ga.gov)

**Source:** 40 states <http://ccresourcecenter.org/>

How you want your letter signed when published (you can use your first name only, full name, or anonymous): \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your address: \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE LETTER # 2

### FAITH

In the book of Genesis, Joseph is thrown in jail and left to rot. Years later, someone recognizes Joseph's skill. Pharaoh not only restores Joseph's humanity, he gives him an important job. It's time Georgia does the same. A criminal conviction, even a minor one, is too often a life sentence to unemployment and poverty in Georgia. Forty states provide a path forward for people who made mistakes but then turned their lives around. But in Georgia, almost all convictions stay on a person's record forever, creating lifetime barriers to employment and housing. Able-bodied people are being denied the chance to work and elderly Georgians are being turned away from senior housing due to a criminal conviction from years or decades ago. As a person of faith, I know redemption and transformation are possible. It's time Georgia honors rehabilitation and expands its expungement law to allow people who have successfully completed their sentences and remained crime free to have a clean slate. Go to [SecondChanceGeorgia.org](http://SecondChanceGeorgia.org) to learn how you can help make this right.

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Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Your email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your address: \_\_\_\_\_

### SAMPLE LETTER # 3

#### INEQUALITY-HOW GEORGIA COMPARES

Did you know Georgia has the highest rate of correctional control in the country, almost twice the rate of the next most punitive state? 4.2 million people (nearly 40% of adults) have a Georgia criminal record. Yet Georgia has one of the most restrictive laws in what it allows to come off a person's record. A conviction in Georgia is too often a dead end path with no way out. No matter how many years have passed, or how much a person has changed, almost all convictions stay on a person's record *forever* in Georgia, creating lifetime barriers to employment and housing. Forty states allow expungement of old convictions to help get people back to work. 40 states! But Georgia's narrow expungement law leaves thousands of individuals without means to earn a living, and Georgia's companies at a disadvantage in hiring. It's time for Georgia to expand its law to allow expungement of certain misdemeanor and felony convictions after a period of conviction-free years. Go to [SecondChanceGeorgia.org](http://SecondChanceGeorgia.org) to learn more.

**Source:** GA highest rate of correctional control

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/correctionalcontrol2018.html>

**Source:** 4.2 million figure: Georgia Bureau of Investigation/Georgia Crime Information Center- Cheryl Payton [Cheryl.Payton@gbi.ga.gov](mailto:Cheryl.Payton@gbi.ga.gov)

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## SAMPLE LETTER # 4

### **RECIDIVISM/PUBLIC SAFETY & THE ECONOMY**

Employment is a key predictor in reducing recidivism, so why does Georgia keep many of the 4.2 million people with a Georgia criminal record locked out of the labor market forever? Especially with more than 250,000 unfilled jobs in Georgia, it doesn't make sense that every conviction is often a life sentence to unemployment and poverty. Unlike 40 states that allow expungement of certain misdemeanor and felony convictions after a period of time, Georgia does not. Illinois found that steady employment led a 62% reduction in recidivism for people with a criminal record. Michigan found that a cleared record increased likelihood of employment by 11% and wages by 22% in the first year. A Stanford University study shows that record expungement led to an average increase of \$6190 in yearly income per individual. If Georgia expanded its expungement law, it would increase public safety, help Georgia's economy, and allow more people to work, rebuild their lives, and support their families. It's time for Georgia to step up and be among the nation's leaders...not lag behind 40 other states who have seen the social and economic benefits of providing second chances for people with past criminal convictions. Go to [SecondChanceGeorgia.org](http://SecondChanceGeorgia.org) to learn more.

**Source:** 4.2 million figure: Georgia Bureau of Investigation/Georgia Crime Information Center- Cheryl Payton [Cheryl.Payton@gbi.ga.gov](mailto:Cheryl.Payton@gbi.ga.gov)

**Source:** 40 states <http://ccresourcecenter.org/>

**Source of GA unfilled jobs figure:** JobsEQ

**Source of Illinois recidivism stat:** <http://www.secondchancegeorgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Safer-Foundation-Three-Year-Recidivism-Study-2008.pdf>

**Michigan Study:** <http://www.secondchancegeorgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/EXPUNGEMENT-OF-CRIMINAL-CONVICTIONS-Michigan-Law.pdf>

**Stanford Study:** <http://www.secondchancegeorgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/A-Cost-Benefit-Analysis-of-Criminal-Record-Expungement-in-Santa-Clara-County.pdf>

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your email address: \_\_\_\_\_

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