

**To the Editor:**

Re "[After Jail Time, a Clean Slate](#)" (Op-Ed, March 21):

As J.J. Prescott and Sonja B. Starr advocate, it is high time to institute automatic expungement of records for minor criminal acts once the formal sentence has been served. Expunging a criminal record, however, does not assist a person who is applying for a license, for example, in law, real estate and medical fields, or for that matter most professions. In those cases, a conviction will still be considered by the board or agency. It is noted on the application form.

In most states, too many occupations are overregulated. California, for example, has more than 200 regulated occupations; each has its own board that has been delegated vast powers by the Legislature, including admission to be allowed to practice.

A felony that is later reduced to a misdemeanor will remain a felony in the eyes of most boards and will be found, usually, to be disqualifying.

In most cases, such lifetime bans are unnecessary for protecting the public. In addition to expunging criminal records, it is time to make appropriate policy revisions to limit these excessive powers, which work against the rehabilitation we profess to offer to most criminals.

Eugene M. Hyman

Los Altos, Calif.

*The writer is a retired judge of the Superior Court of California, Santa Clara County.*