

## Regent University Program Offers Record Expungement Assistance to Human Trafficking Survivors



A groundbreaking initiative at [Regent University](#) is providing vital support to victims of human trafficking by facilitating the expungement of their criminal records. Many individuals coerced into human trafficking find themselves compelled to commit various crimes, including theft, drug-related offenses, and prostitution. To address the enduring impact of these criminal records on survivors' lives, Regent University's program aims to help them overcome the legal hurdles posed by their past.

One survivor, Olivia, shared her harrowing experience of being ensnared in human trafficking. Her once-normal childhood took a dark turn when she left home at 18, leading her to a life on the streets and involvement in criminal activities under the influence of her traffickers. Olivia's story highlights that human trafficking involves a spectrum of crimes dictated by traffickers, encompassing activities far beyond prostitution.

Olivia's trafficking ordeal spanned across the country, leaving her feeling trapped and coerced into actions she had no choice but to perform. Her desperate wish for law enforcement intervention reflects the dire circumstances she faced. Following an undercover operation, Olivia was incarcerated for four years, an experience she later acknowledged as having saved her life.

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The legal consequences of trafficking, however, often linger long after survivors escape their captors. Olivia's story is not unique; numerous survivors bear the weight of a criminal record as they strive to rebuild their lives. Regent University's program, the first of its kind, seeks to alleviate this burden by assisting survivors in expunging their records.

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Meg Kelsey, Assistant Director of the Center for Global Justice, emphasized the inherent injustice of survivors carrying convictions for crimes they were compelled to commit. A recently enacted Virginia law allows for the expungement of charges directly linked to trafficking. The law pertains to specific misdemeanor charges, but advocates are pushing for its expansion to encompass a broader range of offenses.

Kelsey highlighted the significance of offering record relief to trafficking survivors, as these records can impede their housing, employment, and custody prospects long after escaping their traumatic pasts. The multifaceted program helps survivors navigate the legal process and supports their reintegration into society by addressing practical barriers.

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Despite the program's transformative potential, its reach is limited by awareness gaps. Many trafficking survivors remain unaware of the law's existence and the possibility of record expungement. To combat this, Regent University is diligently working to raise awareness about the program and the legal relief it offers.

In a legal landscape where trafficking survivors often confront systemic barriers, [Regent University's](#) pioneering program stands as a beacon of hope. By championing record expungement and comprehensive support, the program seeks to empower survivors to reclaim their lives and reshape their narratives beyond the shadows of their traffickers.

**Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.**