Wiping the slate clean: rehabilitating offenders and protecting the public

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Abstract:
The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) recommended in January 2002 that legislative changes should be introduced to allow the criminal records of certain adults to be expunged. This would happen after a period of time to be determined by the seriousness of the offence, the length of time since it occurred, and the absence of subsequent convictions. In particular, the NESF observed that:

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It has always struck me when asking postgraduate law students to write research proposals in which they should work through the core elements – question, structure, methodology, originality/location in the literature – how ...

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Kilcommins, Shane; Leahy, Susan; Ryan, Andrea (2017)
• The communications must originate in a confidence that they will not be disclosed  • This element of confidentiality must be essential to the full and satisfactory maintenance of the relation  • The relation must be one ...
As a matter of public policy, it is also unwise – studies have shown how the negative impact of disclosing a criminal record leads some people back into crime. Our European neighbours have long recognised this and they have all adopted so-called “spent convictions” laws that wipe the slate clean for many convictions after a specified number of years. Ireland is now getting around to enacting its own spent convictions Bill. While the initiative is to be welcomed, the Bill is in need of improvement and the Oireachtas will have the opportunity to get it right when it comes back to committee stage The reform of the 1974 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act will see the period of time under which the convictions of medium-term prisoners will be ‘spent’ reduced from 10 years to four. Photograph: Mark Harvey/Alamy. The justice secretary, Kenneth Clarke, is to “wipe the slate clean” for hundreds of thousands of offenders by dramatically shortening the period during which they are obliged to tell potential employers about their criminal past. The radical reform of the 1974 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act will see the time after which the convictions of medium-term prisoners a...