



®

DENNIS WILLIAMS, President



JULIE KUSHNER
DIRECTOR
REGION 9A UAW
960 TURNPIKE STREET, SUITE 2D
CANTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02021-2824
PHONE: (781) 821-3037
FAX: (781) 821-3039
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

GARY CASTEEL, Secretary-Treasurer

June 18, 2015

RECEIVED
JUN 22 2015
APPEALS COURT

Joseph Stanton, Clerk
Massachusetts Appeals Court, Room 1200
One Pemberton Square
Boston, MA 02108-1705

Re: Court Cases and Internet Access to Docket Entries and Court Files

To the Trial Court Public Access to Court Records Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Massachusetts CAP Council of the United Auto Workers, AFL-CIO (UAW), which proudly supported CORI legislation in 2010 to give unemployed workers with past criminal records the opportunity to obtain employment and rebuild their lives.

The UAW opposes online access to criminal records from the trial court website because internet access to court records would turn back the clock on reform and make it harder for countless people to get jobs. It also will make the right to seal records a useless remedy. This would happen because once the court makes the information available to the world online, the data can be circulated, posted, and even sold to others online without limitation.

Internet release of all information is at odds with our sealing laws that permit sealing after five years for a misdemeanor, ten years for a felony, and have no waiting period for sealing non-convictions. Access to cases online is contrary to our CORI laws, which limit access to data based on the requestor's level of access, the type of disposition nature, and whether the charge was felony or misdemeanor. Putting court records online also would wreak havoc because court records sometimes have errors and the internet would disseminate the errors to a larger audience given the expansiveness of the worldwide web.

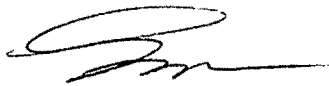
It is a reality of life that many inappropriate communications occur through use of the internet. Giving the public unfettered access to the MassCourts database would, for example, give angry, abusive and vindictive people the ability to harass former defendants, former spouses and other individuals they simply do not like by posting MassCourts information online or otherwise distributing the negative information to employers or business competitors. The convenience of access to data from one's home creates possibilities for mischief that are not as likely to be present when retrieval of the information involves a trip to a courthouse.

Our members who work at legal services programs also report that the Housing Court put eviction records online several years ago and it has harmed tenants. Some landlords blacklist any potential tenant whose name appears in the database.

Opportunities for jobs and housing are the pathway out of poverty. Access to court records online would create too many possibilities for misuse of information. Thus, I urge the courts to not make family law and criminal records available online and to stop the current practice of making Housing Court records available online.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,



Ellen Wallace
Sub-Regional Director
UAW Region 9A
960 Turnpike St.
Canton, MA 02021
Phone: (781) 821-3037
Fax: (781) 821-3039