



**Testimony on HB238**  
***Criminal Procedure - Automatic Expungement***  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Mr. Chair and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU- the largest healthcare union in the nation, where we represent over 10,000 healthcare workers in Maryland. Given the amount of difficulty that Marylanders have to undergo when a police record is assigned, we support HB238 in the attempt to provide more job opportunities and the right to live a life with dignity for all residents across the State.

One mistake should never automatically determine anyone's future but for thousands of Marylanders, this is the sad reality. In Maryland, when an arrest is made, a criminal record is mandated to follow no matter if the person is arrested was, is, or is found to be innocent. Due to this, many workers and job seekers are automatically turned down for job opportunities and job growth due to questions on job applications that relate to past criminal offenses. These records are left on Maryland's Case Search where many employers visit as the last review process before hiring a potential employee. For this reason, this bill would address this problem by automatically expunging various criminal records that are not severe, including police records where an individual is found innocent.

For many low-wage workers/job-seekers, this problem is detrimental because, without a job that allows for a proper livable wage, many workers are forced to rely on government assistance while also facing harsh realities such as evictions and the lack of ability to feed their families. For most families, employment is the only factor that provides security to live life itself and for individuals who have police records, this should not alienate them from being able to obtain the means to survive.

For our members, this legislation is of great significance because some of our members who have had a past criminal record are not able to evolve within their careers, and therefore, they stay stagnant in their work with no opportunity to improve their lives, and consequently, the lives of their families. For this reason, this bill allows individuals the ability to continue on a clean slate in order to obtain a job, or grow within their own career path.

For this reason, we believe that this legislation will create the necessary structure in place to improve overall workforce and economic equity for Marylanders and ask that you support HB238.

Respectfully,

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