

February 23, 2021

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## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB238**

### **Criminal Procedure - Automatic Expungement**

**TO:** Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and members of the House Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Carol Stern, on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ)

My name is Carol Stern from Chevy Chase, state district 16. I am providing this testimony on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ) in support of HB238, Criminal Procedure - Automatic Expungement. JUFJ organizes more than 5,500 people around the state in support of local social, racial, and economic justice campaigns.

In speaking about expungement, Rabbi Peter Burg of Atlanta said, “Our Jewish narrative is ‘Let My People Go,’ and G-d set us free...I can’t think of an area in American life where the legacy of racism and slavery is more clear than the current criminal justice system that we have.”

Expungement to automatically clear people’s records of non-convictions is an important way for our government to facilitate healing and recovery rather than perpetuating cycles of incarceration and unemployment.

The current system punishes people for crimes they haven’t been convicted of committing and is a great injustice. Our state and its criminal procedures should be encouraging and supporting people to thrive, not saddle them with additional barriers to success.

As a mother and grandmother, I am horrified at the idea of not allowing full expungement of things people haven’t been proven to be responsible for, especially young people. The possibility of giving a clean slate is crucial to ensure that job opportunities are fully available for all Marylanders. Expunged records shouldn’t show up on a background check because legally they don’t exist. HB238 will help to ensure that the best candidate for a job is selected and all candidates have the real possibility of getting good jobs, safe housing, and educational opportunities.

**JUFJ respectfully urges a favorable report on HB238, which will be a step toward making our justice system more just for all Marylanders.**