

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with Out for Justice and the Job Opportunities Task Force. I am a resident of MD District. I am a resident of District 8 and a volunteer for Out For Justice. **I am testifying in support of HB 122.**



Last year, legislation was passed to provide automatic expungement for thousands of Marylanders whose charges were not prosecuted, acquitted, dropped, or were found not guilty. This bill would only take effect starting 2024, yet thousands of folks need immediate relief from the barriers that a criminal record puts on attaining a job and housing. Additionally, an important group of dispositions aren't automatically expungable, despite not being findings of guilt: stets and probations before judgment that satisfy court-ordered conditions. **HB122 would speed up the implementation of this bill, so that folks can benefit from it right now and expand eligibility to dispositions of stet and probation before judgment.**

We are in unprecedented times right now, where supply shortages have caused drops in housing stock and impacted the make-up of employment in Maryland and beyond. As a result, the presence of a criminal record can significantly alter the opportunities available for people to find secure housing and financial security for themselves and their families. Maryland's commitment to reducing these barriers by making automatic expungement an upcoming reality shows a belief by lawmakers that criminal records for non-guilty verdicts shouldn't be the thing that denies someone an opportunity to live and work fairly and freely.

This bill honors that commitment, by recognizing we cannot wait for it to be a reality and that we must rid the bill of the loopholes that still unfairly punish folks with stets and probations before judgements that satisfy all court-ordered conditions.

As a volunteer for Out For Justice, an organization that is comprised of currently and formerly incarcerated individuals that advocates for criminal justice reform, I have witnessed first-hand how hard individuals with records are working to get on the right track. They are trying to get jobs and take care of themselves and their loved ones, but cannot do any of those things because of their records. If we want people to make good choices, we have to make good choices available to them.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in **support of HB122.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Melissa Badeker
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore and Out For Justice