



Testimony for the Judicial Proceedings Committee

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SB 37 Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Waiting Periods

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The ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on SB 37, which would reduce waiting periods for the purposes of expungement of criminal records. Completion of a sentence of incarceration comes with many challenges for the newly released once they have returned to their communities. A few of the biggest challenges are employment and housing. Stable employment is much harder to acquire with certain criminal records. These records often present the same barrier to housing for the newly released and their families. SB37 would allow formerly incarcerated persons to overcome these barriers earlier in their reentry process by reducing the waiting periods to get their records expunged to much more reasonable time frames than those that are currently on the books.

Expungement of records helps the fight against recidivism

Access to stable housing and employment are two key elements in ensuring that formerly incarcerated people are not at risk of recidivating. Expungement is a necessary tool in driving down the need for recidivism such that it allows for the formerly incarcerated to no longer have to resort to criminal activity as a means of survival and providing for their loved ones. In this way, SB37 would also aid in ending mass incarceration in this state.

For the foregoing reasons the ACLU of MD urges a favorable report on SB37.

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