

Northeast Catholic Community

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland General Assembly February 2, 2023

Statement of Support (Favorable) on SB 37, Redeem Act of 2023: Reducing Expungement Waiting Periods

The Northeast Catholic Community (NECC) consists of eight Catholic Churches in Northeast Baltimore—St Matthew, Blessed Sacrament, St Dominic, Most Holy Blood, St Anthony of Padua, St Mary Govans, St Francis, and Shrine of the Little Flower. NECC would like to express its strong support for SB37 - REDEEM Act of 2023: Reducing Expungement Waiting Periods.

Right now Maryland has very long waiting periods after an offender has served the complete sentence including any parole period before a person can apply to have any offenses expunged. Since many employers check for criminal offenses and will not hire anyone who has a criminal record, this is a huge barrier to finding employment. The current situation presents a catch-22: Over 60 percent of formerly incarcerated persons remain unemployed one year after their release. This leaves many of the 1.5 million Marylanders with a criminal record out in the cold when trying to obtain gainful employment. A 2015 Manhattan Institute study demonstrated that employment, especially within the first six months of release, drastically lowers the likelihood of recidivism for nonviolent offenders.

Maryland has much longer waiting periods for expungement than most other states in the nation. We are asking that these waiting periods be reduced as detailed in SB 37. This will improve the likelihood of formerly incarcerated persons finding employment and reduce recidivism accordingly.

Thank you for your consideration of our request for a favorable report of SB 37.

