



TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Dawna Cobb, President and Co-Founder of Return Home Baltimore

DATE: February 1, 2023

ORGANIZATION NAME: Baltimore Reentry Resources, Inc., d/b/a Return Home Baltimore

Written Testimony in support of SB. 0037- REDEEM Act of 2023: Reducing Expungement Waiting Periods

I, Dawna Cobb, support the REDEEM Act as a means of reducing the impact of incarceration and enhancing employment opportunities for lower-income workers and job seekers throughout the state.

I am one of the co-founders of Return Home Baltimore, a web-based resource for returning citizens coming home to Baltimore City and Baltimore County. (returnhome.org) Having volunteered with returning citizens for over 10 years and as a lawyer who has volunteered many hours to filing expungements, I support Senate Bill 0037.

As a re-entry volunteer, I have encountered countless good people, who have served time, who want to earn an honest living for their families and themselves, but because of their records, employers won't hire them, and landlords won't rent to them. As you know, this bill only reduces the time one must wait before he or she can expunge certain criminal records. And it kicks in only after obligations have been satisfied (prison sentence, parole, probation, drug treatment, and mandatory supervision.)

Given the labor shortage, this bill makes sense in that it frees up more people--thousands of people by some estimates-- for the workforce.

In short, so much is expected of people with criminal records who have done their time and so little support is given to them. For these reasons and those stated by the Job Opportunities Task Force, I urge a favorable report on SB.0037.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dawna Cobb".

Dawna Cobb

President, Co-Founder
Return Home Baltimore