

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE REDEEM ACT:

Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Modifications

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

FROM: **Ms. Qiana Johnson**

DATE: 1-24-2023

My name is Ms. Qiana Johnson, and I am in support(s) the REDEEM Act for the State of Maryland. As an Advocate for our community in the State of Maryland I have always wondered why there was a extremely longer waiting periods for expungement than most other states and based on my research this is what I now understand.

[Maryland Code Ann., Criminal Procedure §10–110](#) reflects that an individual must wait as follow:

10 years before they are eligible to expunge most *nonviolent* misdemeanor convictions from their record, **15 years** for a common-law battery or 2nd-degree assault conviction, and **15 years** for a non-violent felony. The waiting period kicks in *after* they have completed their entire sentence, parole or probation, drug treatment, *and* any mandatory supervision. In most instances, the waiting periods are *far* longer than the actual sentence, leaving individuals released from incarceration with barriers to education, employment, housing, public assistance, occupational licensing, and much more.

The REDEEM Act simply shortens the waiting periods *after* they have completed their entire sentence, parole or probation, drug treatment, *and* any mandatory supervision with the express intent of removing barriers to employment. Reducing these waiting periods will grant access to **Record Expungement Designed to Enhance the Employability for the 1.5 million Marylanders (REDEEM)** who are shut out of the workforce due to a criminal record.

The provisions of The REDEEM Act align with what most other states are doing regardless of their political affiliation. Everyone must work if they expect to support themselves and their families. Maryland law shouldn't be the reason returning citizens are locked out of employment over a decade *after* they have served their time.

For these reasons, ***I urge a favorable report on 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.

Thank you,

Ms. Qiana Johnson

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