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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**FAVORABLE – HB97- REDEEM Act - Criminal Procedure - Expungement of Records -
Waiting Periods**

January 31, 2023

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon and members of the Judiciary Committee

The primary aim of this bill is to reduce the waiting periods required for record expungement for those who have completed all sentence provisions and requirements for very specific non-violent offenses. This bill will decrease expungement waiting periods for people who have had their charges dropped or been found not guilty in a court of law. The result of passing HB97 will be employment opportunities for many people who are currently considered unemployable because a background check will reveal a 10 year or 15 year old misdemeanor. Without that opportunity, the odds of recidivism and re-incarceration increase drastically.

I am introducing this modification of the expungement waiting period bill with the hope that, as legislators, we understand that sentences served and requirements fulfilled, create the opportunity to return law abiding taxpayers.

The waiting period before expungement has been introduced in previous legislative sessions, and it remains critical to the welfare of our communities in 2023. HB97 alters the expungement statute to reduce the waiting period for the following offenses:

1. *Eligible* Misdemeanors
 - a. From 10 to 3 years
2. Contact Misdemeanors
 - a. From 15 to 5 years
3. *Eligible* Non-Violent Felonies
 - a. From 15 to 5 years

Additional measures in the bill include:

1. The shortened waiting periods only go into effect after any and all necessary treatment, parole, or supervision has been completed;
2. Violent offenses are excluded from this reduction in expungement; and
3. A friendly amendment to include malicious destruction of property.

I urge a vote in favor of House Bill 97. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.