



HB0097 – SUPPORT
Takoma Park Mobilization

House Bill 0097 – SUPPORT
Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Waiting Periods (REDEEM Act)
House Judiciary Committee — January 31, 2023

Takoma Park Mobilization is a grassroots advocacy organization based in Takoma Park and Silver Spring, MD. We are active in environmental, justice, economic, and electoral matters. **We are in SUPPORT of HB0097 (REDEEM Act)** to reduce the impact of incarceration and enhance employment opportunities for lower-income workers and job seekers.

Maryland has much longer waiting periods for expungement than most other states. Current Maryland Code states that an individual must wait 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 the completion of 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 (REDEEM) for the 1.5 million Marylanders 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.

Removing obstacles to providing for one's self and one's family is a critical piece of building an equitable society. Legislators can make residents lives easier or more difficult—we urge you to end policies that create undue burdens.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on The REDEEM Act (HB0097).

Thank you.

Submitted by: Seth Grimes, seth.grimes@gmail.com