

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: **John Preston Ford**

DATE: January 27, 2023

John Ford, works in the workforce development field in the City of Baltimore and allied to several antiracism organizations in the city.

John Ford support(s) 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 work in workforce development in the City of Baltimore. A massive share of the affected population are in Baltimore City, and it's a massive challenge in local workforce development. MOED's Bridge 2 Careers program at our Northwest Career Center works to try to connect people with background-friendly jobs, but after a person has already served their legal consequences for their actions I see no reason why they must continue to be second-class citizens needing special supportive services just to find a job. It is the legislature's job and the judicial system's job to determine the appropriate punishment for a crime. If a person found guilty of a crime deserves more punishment than their sentence, that should go through a transparent and democratic process of changing the law, not layered on in a shady semi-official way that only damages communities and encourages recidivism.

Once an individual has served their time and completed all mandatory supervision, they should not continue to face barriers to employment. I strongly urge a favorable report on The REDEEM Act, if not going even further to abolish ongoing post-carceral punishment.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on The REDEEM Act.

John Ford

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