

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE REDEEM ACT (HB97)**

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

FROM: Emanuel Byron, JOTF Program Trainee

DATE: February 9, 2023

**I, Emanuel Byron,** 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, Emanuel Byron, feel as though the Redeem Act should be in effect because it's not fair for first time offenders like myself or other to have to wait such a long time to move on with our life if we have already been punished. I went to jail for a year for allegedly burglarizing my ex's house. I didn't steal anything or hurt anybody. I received three years of probation and GPS monitoring when I really just wanted to get on with my life. I was going through homelessness at the time I didn't know what burglary was even though I pleaded guilty to this crime. I served my time, a year in jail, so why am I'm still being punished for this act. I was told I have to wait 10 years to get this expunged from my record. I'm currently in school to be a nurse I went to the top high school in Baltimore, Polytechnic Institute, this crime wasn't violent and was also a misdemeanor. This criminal record is making it harder for me to be a law abiding citizen. I can't move on. I've never been in trouble in my life no petty crimes or anything. Also the state is the one who pressed charges the family that was impacted by my crime didn't want to press charges because they thought about my future and how this would affect me in the long run. I feel as though the judge and state or so rash in their decision making that they don't think about the person as a "person."

I was also found to be NCR or non-criminally responsible. Which means because of my disability I was not fully responsible for my act so with that being said I feel the expungement time should definitely be shorter for people with first time nonviolent cases and also people with disabilities.

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

**Emanuel Byron**