

**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: **Gary Baynor**

DATE: January 31st, 2023

**My name is Gary Baynor** and support the REDEEM Act as a means of reducing the impact of incarceration and increasing access to business ventures for entrepreneurs. I live in District 46 (East Baltimore) and am a recent graduate of the Time Organization Program. I came home as part of the Juvenile Restoration Act and have been trying to get on my feet ever since.

I'm 46 years old now but was 18 years old when incarcerated. I spent 27 years inside and left Patuxent in 2022. I understand that my current charges were bad and that was me from when I was a child growing up in a less than stable environment.

Today, I can't get most jobs, but I found work through the services of the JRA. Since then, I've been doing demolition with Mason-Dixon Companies, and am being trained in Carpentry, Electrician, and Plumbing through HTP Homes.

My end goal right now is to stay out of the streets and continue to build a clothing business that I started during my incarceration. I'm trying to get my LLC back and have a copyright for all my designs. It's difficult to acquire loans for my small business and get access to my LLC because of my record. Waiting 15 years additional before I can properly access expungement is impacting my ability to secure access to properly participate in the economy. Which of course is why many return into the system. We've paid our debts to society and when we try to get into the business world we remain blocked.

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. 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. Please pass this bill, even if I can't use it, my neighborhood can.