



MARIAN HOUSE

Women Moving from Dependence to Independence

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 97

**Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Modifications
(The Redeem Act)**

January 27, 2023

Delegate Luke Clippinger
Room 101
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony of Marian House in Support of HB97

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Vice-Chair Moon, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

Marian House is a holistic, healing community for women and their children who are in need of housing and support services. Marian House provides comprehensive support services to assist women with experiences of trauma, including poverty, substance abuse, and incarceration. **I write to urge you to support House Bill 97 - Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records - Modifications**

Over forty years ago, Marian House was opened to provide reentry supports for women leaving incarceration as Sisters and laywomen recognized that lack of support contributed to recidivism rates. Today, we have also expanded to serve women with histories of trauma including homelessness, incarceration, neglect, substance abuse and mental health needs. Since our opening, we have assisted women who have been victims of crime in reinventing and rebuilding themselves through services such as: counseling, substance abuse treatment, job training and providing both long and short-term housing. All the women we have served have overcome obstacles on their journeys to become contributing members of society in the Baltimore area.

Maryland has drastically longer waiting periods for expungement than most other states. [Maryland Code Ann., Criminal Procedure §10–110](#) 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*** they have completed 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 for the 1.5 million Marylanders (REDEEM)** 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.



MARIAN HOUSE

Women Moving from Dependence to Independence

In Financial Year 22, Marian House served twenty-one women who had lived resided in jail, prison, or a juvenile detention facility. Through these women, we have seen firsthand that they struggle to build confidence and independence as they have faced many barriers to employment and housing due to their former criminal records.

By supporting HB97, the 1.5 million Marylanders, including those we serve at Marian House, will be able to expunge their records sooner and have access to the housing and employment they desperately need.

On behalf of the women we serve at Marian House, I respectfully urge you to take the call to action in **SUPPORT of HB97.**

Thank you for your support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Allston', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Katie Allston, LCSW-C
President and C.E.O.