

TO: Hon. Chair William Smith, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Donna Bruce, Owner - Donna Bruce Unlimited, inc.

Good Afternoon Members of the Committee,

I am Donna Bruce, owner of Donna Bruce Unlimited, Inc., which provides art therapy to Baltimore City Mothers who have lost a child to gun violence. I am a resident of District 44B in Baltimore County and support Senate Bill 118 as a means of expanding access to criminal record expungements for DUI/DWIs.

When I lost my son in 2021 due to an overdose, I fell into a deep depression and was placed on medication by my doctors. I also began to consume alcohol in higher amounts which caused friction between my significant other and myself. During an argument with him, I backed my car out of my driveway and ran over an exposed gas main, damaging my vehicle.

When I called the police to report the exposed gas main, they charged me with a DUI even though I was moving my car in my own driveway. This charge cost me my job at the Baltimore County Detention Center, where I provided peer support and trauma-informed care, and crippled my access to transportation and employment. I was also given eight points on my license and was then without transportation for years.

I decided to turn my pain into my passion and assist those grieving their sons and coping with substances by starting my own trauma-informed care business and now have clients all throughout Baltimore City.

I have been employed with the Enoch Pratt Library for two years where I created a pilot substance abuse treatment peer navigator program in seven different libraries serving over 1000 City Residents and am expanding to state agencies.

However, it is still difficult to obtain a promotion, expand to new markets, or manage my clients with this conviction on my record.

Senate Bill 118 will allow me to expunge this charge after waiting a reasonable waiting period. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue and I urge a favorable report.