

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2023 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

Senate Bill 505

(Senator Muse)

Judicial Proceedings

Judiciary

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**Criminal Procedure - Expungement and Shielding - Probation Before Judgment  
for Driving While Impaired or Under the Influence**

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This bill authorizes a person to file a petition for expungement under § 10-105 of the Criminal Procedure Article if the person received a probation before judgment for a charge of violating § 21-902 of the Transportation Article (driving while under the influence or driving while impaired). The petition may not be filed within 10 years after the date the petitioner was discharged from probation. The bill also authorizes these individuals to petition to shield a police or court record for these dispositions under § 10-303 of the Criminal Procedure Article no earlier than five years after the person was discharged from probation for the offense. The bill makes corresponding technical changes.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures for the Judiciary increase by *as much as* \$1.0 million in FY 2024. Future year expenditures reflect annualization, inflation, and the elimination of one-time costs. Additional general fund and Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures may be incurred by affected State agencies, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4
Net Effect	(\$1.0)	(\$1.2)	(\$1.2)	(\$1.3)	(\$1.4)

*Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** Local expenditures increase for local entities to process expungement and shielding orders issued by courts, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

### Current Law:

#### *Expungements*

In general, a person seeking expungement of records pertaining to a criminal charge must file a petition for expungement with the court under § 10-105 or § 10-110 of the Criminal Procedure Article. With some exceptions, § 10-105 applies to dispositions other than a conviction, and § 10-110 applies to expungements of convictions.

Expungement of a court or police record means removal from public inspection:

- by obliteration;
- by removal to a separate secure area to which persons who do not have a legitimate reason for access are denied access; or
- if access to a court record or police record can be obtained only by reference to another such record, by the expungement of that record, or the part of it that provides access.

Under § 10-105 of the Criminal Procedure Article, a person who has been charged with the commission of a crime for which a term of imprisonment may be imposed or who has been charged with a civil offense or infraction, except a juvenile offense, may file a petition for expungement of a police record, court record, or other record maintained by the State or a political subdivision of the State, under various circumstances listed in the statute. These grounds include acquittal, dismissal of charges, entry of probation before judgment, entry of *nolle prosequi*, *stet* of charge, and gubernatorial pardon. Individuals convicted of a crime that is no longer a crime, convicted of possession of cannabis under § 5-601 of the Criminal Law Article, convicted of or found not criminally responsible for specified public nuisance crimes or specified misdemeanors, or who had a conviction vacated due to being a victim of human trafficking (as defined in statute), are also eligible for expungement of the associated criminal records under certain circumstances.

In general, a petition for expungement under § 10-105 based on an acquittal, a *nolle prosequi*, or a dismissal may not be filed within three years after the disposition, unless the petitioner files a written waiver and release of all tort claims arising from the charge. A petition based on a probation before judgment may not be filed before the petitioner's discharge from probation or three years after the probation was granted, whichever is later. A petition based on a *stet* with the requirement of drug or alcohol abuse treatment may not be filed before the petitioner's completion of treatment or three years after the *stet* was entered on the docket, whichever is later. Otherwise, a petition based on *stet* or a

compromise may not be filed within three years after the *stet* or compromise. A person is not entitled to expungement if (1) subject to a specified exception, the petition is based on the entry of probation before judgment and the person, within three years of the entry of the probation before judgment, has been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation or a crime where the act on which the conviction is based is no longer a crime or (2) the person is a defendant in a pending criminal proceeding.

Pursuant to § 10-107 of the Criminal Procedure Article, if two or more charges, other than one for a minor traffic violation or possession of cannabis under § 5-601 of the Criminal Law Article, arise from the same incident, transaction, or set of facts, they are considered to be a unit. A charge for a minor traffic violation or possession of cannabis under § 5-601 of the Criminal Law Article that arises from the same incident, transaction, or set of facts as a charge in the unit is not a part of the unit. If a person is not entitled to expungement of one charge or conviction in a unit, the person is not entitled to expungement of any other charge or conviction in the unit.

### *Shielding*

Section 10-303 of the Criminal Procedure Article authorizes a person to petition a court to shield the person's court records and police records relating to one or more "shieldable convictions" of the person entered in the circuit court or the District Court in one county no earlier than three years after the person satisfies the sentence imposed for all convictions for which shielding is requested, including parole, probation, or mandatory supervision. This authorization does not apply to a conviction for a domestically related crime. If a person is not eligible for shielding of one conviction in a "unit," the person is not eligible for shielding of any other conviction in the unit. A person may be granted only one shielding petition over the lifetime of the person, and a court may grant a shielding petition for good cause.

"Shield" means to render a court record and police record relating to a conviction of a crime inaccessible by members of the public. Also, the Maryland Judiciary Case Search may not in any way refer to the existence of specific records shielded in accordance with the aforementioned authorization. "Shieldable conviction" means a conviction of 1 of a list of 12 specified crimes. A "unit" means 2 or more convictions that arise from the same incident, transaction, or set of facts. If the person is convicted of a new crime during the applicable time period, the original conviction or convictions are not eligible for shielding unless the new conviction becomes eligible for shielding. A person who is a defendant in a pending criminal proceeding is not eligible for shielding. A shielded conviction may not be considered a conviction for specified expungement provisions. Section 10-303 also contains provisions regarding continued access to shielded information by specified individuals and entities, prohibited disclosures of shielded information, and prohibited inquiries into a person's shielded information.

## **State Expenditures:**

### *Judiciary*

General fund expenditures for the Judiciary increase by *as much as* \$1.0 million in fiscal 2024, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2023 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring 16 clerks among the District Court and the circuit courts to process expungements under the bill. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Positions	16.0
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$900,691
Operating Expenses	<u>118,544</u>
<b>Maximum FY 2024 Judiciary Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,019,235</b>

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

According to the Judiciary, the following probations before judgment for violations of § 21-902 of the Transportation Article were entered in the District Court and the circuit courts:

- in fiscal 2021: 5,369 in the District Court and 689 in the circuit courts; and
- in fiscal 2022: 6,231 in the District Court and 902 in the circuit courts.

Based on data regarding dispositions eligible for expungement under the bill (including older dispositions) and estimated processing times for expungements, the Judiciary anticipates the need for at least 14 clerks in the District Court and 2 clerks in the circuit courts. While data is not available on the projected number of petitions that will be filed under the bill, given the cumulative number of eligible dispositions, there is likely a need for additional personnel. To the extent that fewer petitions than anticipated are filed or personnel can process expungements more efficiently than currently projected, expenditures for the Judiciary are less.

The Judiciary notes that additional personnel beyond the positions discussed above are needed depending on the number of shielding petitions received, which cannot be reliably predicted at this time. However, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) advises that the additional personnel accounted for in the estimate above can likely allow the Judiciary to accommodate any additional shielding petitions received due to the bill.

**Exhibit 1** contains information on the number of petitions for expungement filed in the trial courts in fiscal 2020 through 2022.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Petitions for Expungement**  
**Fiscal 2020-2022**

	<b><u>District Court</u></b>	<b><u>Circuit Court</u></b>
Fiscal 2020	55,105	8,642
Fiscal 2021	39,061	5,940
Fiscal 2022	32,874	5,574

Source: Maryland Judiciary

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*Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services*

General fund expenditures may increase for the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to process expungement (or shielding) orders under the bill. DPSCS advises generally that the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) requires one additional administrative employee for every 2,500 additional orders for expungement it receives. However, DLS notes that CJIS has been routinely accommodating workloads beyond the 2,500-caseload standard. The number of additional clerks needed cannot be reliably determined at this time and depends on the number of expungement orders issued by courts under the bill. *For illustrative purposes only*, the cost associated with hiring one administrative employee is approximately \$68,500 in fiscal 2024 and \$92,800 in fiscal 2028.

*Department of Transportation*

TTF expenditures increase to the extent that Maryland Department of Transportation police departments possess records that need to be expunged or shielded under the bill and cannot accommodate any additional workload generated by the bill with existing personnel. The extent to which this occurs cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

*Department of State Police*

The Department of State Police advises that it can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources.

**Local Expenditures:** The bill has an operational effect on local police departments and other entities that are custodians of records eligible for expungement or shielding under the bill. Depending on the volume of expungement and shielding orders received from the courts and the capacity to absorb this additional workload with existing resources, the bill may require local entities to employ additional personnel.

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 660 (Delegate Alston, *et al.*) - Judiciary.

**Information Source(s):** Carroll, Harford, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's counties; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of General Services; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 23, 2023

km/jkb Third Reader - April 10, 2023

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