

February 19, 2020

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401



**Senate Bill 589 - Criminal Procedure – Partial Expungement - FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Smith and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee members,

Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC), an advocacy organization that mobilizes community members for the health, dignity, and safety of people targeted by the war on drugs and anti- sex worker policies, supports Senate Bill 83 which would authorize a person to file a petition for a partial expungement for charges eligible for expungement that were charged within a “unit” of several charges.

Under current law, when two or more charges arise from the same incident, and some, but not all, of those charges are eligible for expungement, the person is barred from petitioning for expungement for any of the charges. **It is common practice among law enforcement to add on additional minor charges in order to build a larger case against an individual.** Without the opportunity to expunge any of those charges down the line, many Marylanders are saddled with what appears to be a long criminal record. These records create life-threatening barriers to accessing employment, social services, and other opportunities to lead a productive life. This is especially insidious when we consider the numerous reports that show **Black Marylanders, especially those living in lower income neighborhoods, are more likely to be charged, prosecuted, and punished more harshly for criminal offenses.**

Partial expungement is a fairer rule and is a step in the right direction to address the injustice of over-criminalizing lower income Black Marylanders.

BHRC respectfully requests the Committee give this measure a **favorable report**. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about BHRC or this position, please contact Tricia Christensen at [Tricia@BaltimoreHarmReduction.org](mailto:Tricia@BaltimoreHarmReduction.org).