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Advocates for Children and Youth
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
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Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Health Care for the Homeless
Homeless Persons
Representation Project
Job Opportunities Task Force
League of Women Voters of Maryland
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Maryland Catholic Conference
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
Public Justice Center
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Welfare Advocates

Maryland Alliance for the Poor

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 811

Automatic Expungement-Non Convictions

Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 5, 2020

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Matt Quinlan, Co-Chairs

The Maryland Alliance for the Poor (MAP) supports SB 811, which is a means of reducing the impact of incarceration on low wage workers and eliminating barriers to employment.

Currently, Marylanders can obtain an expungement for charges that result in an acquittal, dismissal of charges, nolle prosequi, or Probation before Judgment (PBJ). In addition, individuals convicted or found not criminally responsible of specified public nuisance crimes are also eligible for expungement. However, many individuals are unaware that they have a record and do not move to seek expungement if they were found **not** guilty. As a result, thousands of Marylanders are stuck with dated records, many of which are non-convictions that hinder their ability to secure employment. Additionally, individuals seeking expungement services are subject to a waiting period that can last, in some cases, as long as fifteen years.

The consequences of a criminal record are longstanding and nearly insurmountable. It presents an even larger barrier for communities of color, who are statistically more likely to be arrested, and account for nearly 72 percent of the prison population while only making up 24 percent of the state's population. African-American male without a criminal record is less likely to be called back during the hiring process than a similarly qualified white male with a criminal record. This fact is further alarming juxtaposed with the state's unemployment rate, which is twice as much for African Americans.

Criminal records serve as both the cause and consequence of poverty for many Marylanders looking for work. MAP fully supports any legislation that eliminates poverty and increase access to employment in the state of Maryland. For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report of Senate Bill 811.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges a favorable report for support SB 811

The Maryland Alliance for the Poor (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.