



TESTIMONY FOR HB0238 CRIMINAL PROCEDURE – AUTOMATIC EXPUNGEMENT

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Wells

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0238 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

This bill sets requirements for automatic expungement of civil charges within 60 days of the October 1, 2021 effective date. Civil charges would be automatically expunged from all records if –

- The person is acquitted
- The charge or warrant is dismissed or invalidated
- A probation before judgement is entered (other than one for drug or alcohol treatment)
- A nolle prosequi (other than one for drug or alcohol treatment) is entered
- The court indefinitely postpones the trial by marking the charge 'stet' on the docket

No paperwork or other involvement is required by the person who was charged, except the requirement to pay any court costs. This will give so many people a feeling of relief. These kinds of charges follow a person around and come to light at the worst possible time. They can stand in the way of getting jobs and cause the person with the record to struggle that much harder. If no harm was done, we believe these kinds of charges should be cleared.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.