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Behavioral Health System Baltimore  
CASH Campaign of Maryland  
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Energy Advocates  
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Family League of Baltimore  
Fuel Fund of Maryland  
Health Care for the Homeless  
Homeless Persons  
Representation Project  
Job Opportunities Task Force  
Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,  
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League of Women Voters of Maryland  
Loyola University Maryland  
Maryland Catholic Conference  
Maryland Center on Economic Policy  
Maryland Community Action  
Partnership  
Maryland Family Network  
Maryland Food Bank  
Maryland Hunger Solutions  
Paul's Place  
Public Justice Center  
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore  
Welfare Advocates

## Marylanders Against Poverty

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## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 138

### Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Expansion

*Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee*

**February 1, 2022**

*Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs*

**Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports SB 138**, which aims to expand access to expungements for those not found guilty of a charge.

In the state of Maryland, a person acquires a criminal record upon any arrest, regardless of whether or not that individual is ever convicted of a crime. That arrest and subsequent criminal record remains publicly searchable until charges and dispositions are expunged, causing barriers to employment, housing, education, public assistance, and occupational licensing.

Because of these consequences, criminal records can both cause and exacerbate existing struggles for low-income individuals struggling with poverty.

In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed important legislation to automatically expunge certain non-convictions (acquittals, dismissals, and nolle pros), which positively impacted over 77,000 Marylanders.

Unfortunately, a subset of non-convictions, including probation before judgement and stets, were not included. Often individuals with non-conviction charges, PBJs, or stets are unaware that they even have a criminal record that is viewable by the public, making them more likely to suffer from the negative impacts of having a criminal record.

For this reason, automatic expungement for all non-convictions is necessary to ensure that individuals not convicted of a crime are not unjustly barred from gainful employment.

**MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 138.**

***Marylanders Against Poverty (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.