



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 505: Criminal Procedure - Expungement – Convictions

****FAVORABLE****

March 9, 2023

TO: Sen. William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, Sen. Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair and the members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Rev. Kenneth O. Phelps, Jr., Co-Chair, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

DATE: March 9, 2023

The Episcopal Church, at its 78th Convention in 2015, passed sweeping resolutions aimed at ending mass incarceration practices and mitigating solutions for the damages inflicted upon certain communities by both arrest and sentencing policies and practices.

The Episcopal Church at large and the Diocese of Maryland in particular has embraced the concept of reparations, a concept not limited to financial considerations but to a leveling of the playing field across a broad spectrum of issues, including criminal justice. Serious charges, even if they were dropped or resulted in a not-guilty verdict, hinder people who are attempting to get jobs, find housing or seek education, often because the information is easily accessible.

We believe that increasing the number and type of crimes that can be expunged and shortening the prescribed waiting periods- in some cases to immediate – will be another small step in repairing (reparations) the damage done by a decades long policy of mass incarcerations.

In the hopes that we can expand the number of expungable offenses in the future, the Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report.