



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE REDEEM ACT

Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Modifications

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings

FROM: Aaron D. Thompson, Co-Founder and CEO, HTP Homes, Inc.

DATE: February 1, 2023

HTP Homes, Inc. is a minority/woman founded 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization guided by its mission that no human is expendable and everyone deserves a second chance. We teach construction and job readiness skills to at-risk and justice system involved individuals. We strive to empower each person we serve to be productive and successful members of their communities.

As the co-founder and CEO of HTP Homes, Aaron Thompson supports the REDEEM Act as a means of reducing the impact of incarceration and enhancing employment opportunities for returning citizens, lower-income workers and job seekers throughout the state.

Maryland has drastically longer waiting periods for expungement than most other states. [Maryland Code Ann., Criminal Procedure §10–110](#) states that an individual must wait **10 years** before they are eligible to expunge most *nonviolent* misdemeanor convictions from their record, **15 years** for a common-law battery or 2nd-degree assault conviction, and **15 years** for a non-violent felony. The waiting period kicks in *after* they have completed their entire sentence, parole or probation, drug treatment, *and* any mandatory supervision. In most instances, the waiting periods are *far* longer than the actual sentence, leaving individuals released from incarceration with barriers to education, employment, housing, public assistance, occupational licensing, and much more.

The REDEEM Act simply shortens the waiting periods *after* they have completed their entire sentence, parole or probation, drug treatment, *and* any mandatory supervision with the express intent of removing barriers to employment. Reducing these waiting periods will grant access to **Record Expungement Designed to Enhance the Employability for the 1.5 million Marylanders (REDEEM)** who are shut out of the workforce due to a criminal record. The provisions of The REDEEM Act align with what most other states are doing regardless of their political affiliation. Everyone must work if they expect to support themselves and their families. Every day participants in the HTP Homes Building Second Chances



Program are diligently working to learn the skills they need to earn a livable wage and change their lives. Maryland law shouldn't be the reason returning citizens are locked out of employment opportunities over a decade *after* they have served their time.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on The REDEEM Act.

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