

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am a resident of District 46. I am testifying in support of [HB0746](#), Criminal Procedure – Non-Convictions Expungement. This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice - Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with Out for Justice.



In Maryland, a criminal record is acquired upon arrest, whether or not a person is ever convicted of a crime. Anything that occurs after an arrest is documented on an individual's criminal record and, in Maryland, will remain publicly visible via [Maryland Case Search](#) for three years unless the individual waives their right to sue. **The appearance of a criminal record in a routine background check can and often will block access to employment, education, housing, and occupational licensing – all of which are necessary to advance in Maryland.** And [85% of employers perform background checks on all of their job applicants](#) and deny employment to many returning citizens based on a record. There is no valid reason that charges that did not result in a conviction (i.e. non-convictions) should visibly remain on the public record and prevent access to opportunity.

Maryland's current law inadvertently replaces the "innocent until proven guilty" standard with an unjust "guilty even if proven innocent" standard.

Enacting [Immediate Expungement via Storage](#) for all charges that result in acquittals, dismissals, and nolle prosequis would allow the state to retain information while dismantling a major barrier to people who are seeking employment, public assistance, housing, or occupational licensing.

For these reasons, I am encouraging you to vote **in support of [HB0746](#)**, Criminal Procedure – Non-Convictions Expungement.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Liz Simon-Higgs

308 E Randall Street, Baltimore, MD 21230

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore