



Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 26, 2024

House Bill 550

Criminal Procedure – Expungement – Vendor Contracts

Support

NCADD-Maryland supports House Bill 550. We believe ensuring the technology is in place to make the expungement process more efficient is important. NCADD-Maryland has long advocated for policies that help people involved with the criminal justice system avoid some of the unintended collateral damage caused by our drug policies. When people who struggle with substance use disorders get treatment and start the recovery process, criminal records are often huge barriers to success. Obtaining employment and housing is difficult, and sometimes impossible. Without a place to live or a reliable income, some people are much more likely to re-offend and/or return to alcohol and drug use.

House Bill 550 will require the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to engage a vendor in its Computerized Criminal History system modernization project that will ensure people who have more than one charge or conviction can have each evaluated and processed on its own in attempts to expunge them from a person's record. Treating the charges or convictions individually may allow some people to reduce the number of items on their records, reducing the discrimination that so often follows those who have been incarcerated.

These kinds of policy changes are a necessary component to significantly improving our communities. When people have served their time, they should have the opportunities and supports needed to ensure they are able maintain productive lives and livelihoods with their families. Removing some of the barriers to success will also help people with substance use disorders maintain their recovery.

We urge your support of House Bill 550 so the General Assembly is able to make meaningful policy changes.