



TESTIMONY FOR HB0658 Clean Slate Act of 2024

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Moon

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0658 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Under HB0658, *automated* expungements would be extended to individuals who completed their sentences, have no extenuating circumstances, and haven't committed a domestic crime. For individuals who committed a misdemeanor, automated expungement would occur 7 years after the date of the conviction; and for felonies, at least 20 years. Individuals *filing* for expungement would no longer have to finish probation and parole requirements before applying for expungement after completion of their sentence.

For the convicted individual, expungement offers better chances for housing, education, and employment. This, in turn, reduces the impact on families and children who stand to benefit from a more successful reentry of the former offender. So, the shorter the waiting period for expungement, the better!

For the state, HB0658 reduces the prolonged impact of discrimination in our criminal justice system that results in multiple and harsher sentences that appear to be race related. In addition, a successful reentry aids in keeping an individual from becoming a repeat offender. Thus, a more successful reentry could mean avoided costs associated with re-incarceration and the support families would need who were financially dependent on this individual.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition continues to advocate for this and similar bills that increase chances for a successful reentry for former offenders and bills that chip away at the injustice in our criminal system.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.