



House Judiciary Committee

March 5, 2024

House Bill 523

Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Good Cause

Support

NCADD-Maryland supports House Bill 523. 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.

Current law states that courts may grant a petition for expungement on a showing of good cause if the charges resulted in a non-conviction, probation before judgment, stet, or the charge was vacated. The proposed legislation seeks to expand the court's good cause expungement power to misdemeanors or felonies they deem worthy of expungement. This bill simply allows judges to grant a petition for expungement at any time on a showing of good cause. This flexibility will allow judges to make decisions based on individual circumstances.

This kind of policy change is 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 523.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.