



OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE CITY

February 5th, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senate Office Building
2 East Miller Senate Office
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of SB0398 - Criminal Procedure - Automated Expungement

Dear Chairman Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am writing to express the support of the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City for Senate Bill 398. This bill seeks to repeal a certain provision of law requiring the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to expunge certain cannabis possession cases by a specified date. It will establish procedures for the automated expungement of eligible records by both the Department and the Judiciary.

This legislation will provide thousands of Maryland residents, who pose no threat to public safety, with a genuine opportunity to move forward. Currently, individuals with a criminal record—regardless of the nature of the offense or the time elapsed since the conviction—face significant barriers to employment, housing, education, public assistance, and family reunification. These barriers often push individuals into cycles of economic instability, increasing the likelihood of recidivism.

Public safety and accountability are this office's highest priorities. An essential step in making our communities safer is ensuring that individuals who have served their time and no longer pose a risk to society can fully reintegrate. By facilitating automatic expungement, this bill will help reduce recidivism, lower unemployment rates, strengthen family stability, and ultimately enhance public safety.

While petition-based record clearance measures exist, they have proven largely ineffective in addressing the needs of our communities. Many individuals eligible for expungement never complete the process due to financial burdens, lack of legal knowledge, or bureaucratic hurdles. By implementing automatic expungement, Maryland will take a critical step toward a more just and equitable system.

I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB0398. This bill is a necessary step toward justice reform, economic opportunity, and safer communities across Maryland.



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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hassan Giordano

Hassan Giordano
Chief, External Affairs