

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony for Senate Bill 398

Criminal Procedure - Automated Expungement

TO: Hon. William C. Smith, Jr, Chair, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: February 5, 2024

POSITION: Support

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports Senate Bill 398.**

SB 398 intends to expunge most misdemeanor convictions after three years and do so automatically through the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Judiciary. Two offenses, one for domestic violence and the other for second degree assault would only be eligible for automatic expungement after seven years.

There are many ramifications for a person with a criminal record even for minor offenses. Clearly these effects are most prevalent in employment situations and have often either prevented a person from being hired or in some cases being fired after being hired. Far too often low skilled and low-income persons have had some prior criminal record that prevents them from employment and the ability to move forward with their lives in a productive manner.

Not only is this a problem for them in moving forward with their individual lives, but takes employees out of the workforce, and removes tax-payers from the tax base thereby harming the economy and state revenues.

SB 398 is an important and necessary step towards criminal justice reform that also contributes to our state's workforce and tax base. **For these reasons, JOTF supports Senate Bill 398 and urges a favorable report.**

For more information, contact:

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