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GOVERNOR

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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, I urge a favorable report on SB432/HB499 - The Expungement Reform Act of 2025. This legislation builds on the Governor's Executive Clemency Order by ensuring prior convictions are not barriers to opportunity. The Expungement Reform Act provides Marylanders better pathways to work, wages, and wealth.

First, the legislation reverses the Appellate Court of Maryland's decision *In Re Expungement Petition of Abhishek I.* and ensures an individual who completed their probation or parole is eligible for expungement. Second, the bill expands the list of non-violent offenses that can be expunged. Third, the bill removes "stet" charges and convictions included within the Governor's Executive Clemency Order from public view on Judiciary Case Search.

These reforms will address Maryland's history of racial injustice, including policies that deliberately targeted communities of color. Criminal records are often barriers to opportunity, denying individuals who have paid their debt to society vital services like housing and employment. Information from the Administrative Office of the Courts show that there were 45,001 petitions for expungement in fiscal 2021 and 38,448 petitions for expungement in fiscal 2022 in both the district and circuit court following the *Abhishek Decision*. By making expungement more accessible and shielding individual's information on Judiciary Case Search, the Expungement Reform Act will protect Marylanders from unfair societal stigmas and help them build a successful future. Governor Moore is proud to sponsor legislation that will make Maryland more just, and I look forward to collaborating with this esteemed body to guide its successful passage.

Sincerely,
Myles Hicks
Deputy Legislative Officer
Office of the Governor