

Monday, February 3, 2025



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County.

We are working in active collaboration with and support for Out for Justice. I am a resident of Baltimore City. **I am testifying in support of SB0432 - Criminal Records - Expungement and Maryland Judiciary Case Search (Expungement Reform Act of 2025).**

In 2022, the Court of Special Appeals ruled that any probation violation means a conviction is indefinitely ineligible for expungement, based on a legal interpretation that a violation means that the individual has not “satisfactorily completed the sentence”, regardless of the nature of the violation. This prevents people who violated their probation from ever getting eligible convictions expunged.

When a person’s conviction is ineligible for expungement, the record of the conviction can have devastating consequences for that person’s life. Consequences include being unable to rent an apartment, obtain employment or work credentials, gain admission to college or to programs that help pay for college, keep custody of one’s children, access some government services, or vote in elections. In short, the consequences of unexpunged convictions can severely hamper a person’s ability to live a fulfilling, productive life. Instead of indefinitely and unduly punishing people for offenses for which they’ve served their time, our justice system should support people who want to participate fully in society and contribute to their communities.

SB0432, sponsored by Governor Moore, would support people petitioning for expungements by lifting the ban on expungements if a probation violation occurred (Abhishek Reform); adding seven (7) common misdemeanors to the expungement

eligibility list; and removing all pardoned marijuana charges and 3-year stets from Case Search. These changes to existing expungement law will help ensure that misdemeanors or parole violations do not permanently alter the trajectory of a person's life. The law will support people in moving on after minor offenses and participating successfully in society.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB0432 - Criminal Records - Expungement and Maryland Judiciary Case Search (Expungement Reform Act of 2025)**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
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