

Dear Chair Clippinger and the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Maria Spears and I am a resident of district 7 and I am writing in support of Good Cause expungement, HB 55. 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 judgement, stet, or the charged was vacated. The proposed legislation seeks to expand the court's good cause expungement power to misdemeanors or felonies it deems worthy of expungement.

My experience with the legal system is that there is no justice for victims. I've been a victim of the system for decades. I've been a victim of abuse since I was as young as 7 years old. I grew up believing that the abuse was my fault. Eventually the abuse led me to homelessness. The streets were much scarier for a young girl abandoned. So yes eventually I got tired of being abused in any and every way possible mentally, emotionally, physically, and most crucial sexually. The moment I started to defend and protect myself society painted a picture of me that will haunt me along with the trauma and scars. I'm not saying this because I am a victim I'm saying this because so many other woman can't say this or fear that nobody will listen.

I believe criminal record expungements are important because it gives people the opportunity to change their lives, support their families, to have better career opportunities, and accomplish achievable goals, qualify for certain benefits and resources and jobs.

When I am able to get my record expunged I'm going to go to college I would like to become a social worker, children's therapist, addictions counselor, work with children with disabilities, animal shelter and grow within the BMORE Beautiful community. I stand with Center for Urban Families & Turnaround Tuesday.

It will be a challenge (and huge time investment) for the legislature to decide every single conviction that should be expungable. This bill proposes a common-sense solution: let the judges who levy the sentence decide whether it should be expunged once a person has served their time. I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Maria Spears