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March 4, 2025

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: Adam Spangler
Legislative Aide, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 621 – Criminal Procedure - Expungement - Adverse Actions and
Removal from Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) System–
Support in Concept

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports the intent of **House Bill 621** – Criminal Procedure – Expungement – Adverse Actions and Removal from Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) System.

Under current law, expunged cases cannot be used for certain purposes, and someone whose case was expunged need not refer to the expunged case when answering questions about their criminal history. **House Bill 621** adds the following additional protections (1) an expunged offense may not be used to deny an application for a job and (2) an expunged case cannot be used to deny a “license, permit, registration, or government service” or for an “educational institution to expel or refuse to admit the person.” The bill also adds the MDEC electronic courts system to the list of places where expunged cases should not be.

Criminal records can create significant barriers to employment, housing, education, public assistance, family reunification, and the opportunity to build good credit. For many individuals with a justice-involved background, having a record can result in lifelong restrictions, preventing them from accessing resources necessary for achieving stable futures for themselves and their families.

Record expungement is an effective solution for removing barriers to opportunities for justice-involved individuals and their families. While there are current petition-based record

clearance measures in Maryland law, these options often leave many eligible individuals behind. Many people are unaware that they qualify for record-clearing, while others find it challenging to navigate the expensive and complicated process of filing a record-clearing petition in court. This often requires hiring a lawyer and taking time off work to appear in court, leading to thousands of dollars in legal bills and court costs. Additionally, the courts face the burden of processing each petition individually, which strains valuable judicial resources.

Many licensing boards and some educational institutions require full disclosure of records, even those that have been expunged for considerations. **House Bill 621** would remove that barrier for those individuals with justice-involved backgrounds and allow them access to more employment and educational opportunities. For the foregoing reasons, the OAG supports the intent of **House Bill 621**.

cc: Members of the Judiciary Committee