

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Honorable
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee —

My name is Rianna Eckel and I'm a resident of District 43, and a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore. Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore is a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I was arrested when I was 15, and having my charge expunged at 18 changed the trajectory of my life for the better. **I am writing in support of SB464 - Commission to Examine the Expungement Laws in Maryland.**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Over the past decade, the General Assembly has done a great deal of important work reforming the expungement laws in Maryland. This work has ensured that many more people who have rehabilitated themselves have been able to move on from past mistakes and participate fully in society without the stigma of having a criminal record. When Marylanders are not barred from housing, jobs, and opportunities based on years' (or decades') old convictions, our communities and our state benefit.

Despite these changes, however, the expungement process remains opaque to many people, and burdensome to the courts and to agencies working to comply with expungement law. Many people who have become eligible to expunge past convictions, acquittals, and dismissals are simply unaware of the possibility. It is time to take another look at the expungement law as a whole, with an eye to streamlining and simplifying the process, and making expungement more available to citizens who have left their previous mistakes behind them.

SB464 would establish a commission to conduct this review. By bringing all the stakeholders in the expungement process together to discuss what is and is not working, and what might be possible, we can spur further reform of the expungement laws that will operate to the benefit of everyone.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to **issue a favorable report on SB464 - Commission to Examine the Expungement Laws in Maryland.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rianna Eckel
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore