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February 17, 2026

TO: The Honorable Will Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Tiffany Clark
Director, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: Senate Bill 525 - Criminal Procedure - Expungement of Records - Good Cause (Support in Concept)

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports in concept Senate Bill 525 – Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Good Cause. Senate Bill 525 authorizes individuals to petition for expungement of any misdemeanor or felony conviction based on a showing of good cause after completing their sentence, with waiting periods of five years for misdemeanors and seven years for felonies.

This legislation directly supports our efforts to remove barriers to employment, housing, education, and economic stability for justice-involved individuals who have demonstrated rehabilitation. Criminal records create significant obstacles that prevent Marylanders from accessing resources necessary for stable futures for themselves and their families. Senate Bill 525 establishes a structured framework that balances public safety considerations with second chances, requiring courts to evaluate six factors including the nature of the crime, the person's history and character, risk to public safety, rehabilitation success, time since conviction, and the impact on employment and housing opportunities. By allowing courts to grant expungement petitions on a showing of good cause after appropriate waiting periods, this legislation provides a meaningful pathway for individuals who have completed their sentences and demonstrated positive change to move forward without the lifelong burden of a criminal record.

We appreciate the General Assembly's work on this important policy and welcome the opportunity to share our perspective.