

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

My name is Rianna Eckel, I live in District 43A, and I am a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore. I was also arrested when I was 15, and having my charge expunged greatly improved my life. 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 am writing in support of SB525: Good Cause Expungement.**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

According to the Legal Aid Justice Center, “Criminal records are more than just files stowed away in a database—they can stand in the way of renting an apartment, securing a job or a work credential, gaining admission to or paying for college, keeping custody of children, leaning on public benefits programs when needed, and voting in elections.”<sup>1</sup> Maryland has moved to broaden the availability of expungement in recent years, in recognition of the fact that all of society benefits when a citizen is rehabilitated from involvement in the criminal justice system and is no longer burdened by the weight of old convictions that reflect who they used to be, not who they are now.

Even under our broader expungement laws, however, there are people still left behind: those whose situations are not encompassed or imagined by the current law, whom the courts have no flexibility to assist. Just as a court has the discretion to hand down a sentence, so they should have the discretion to grant an expungement if they find there is “good cause” to do so.

Not limiting the opportunities of citizens who have paid their debt to transition successfully back into the community and the economy simply makes sense for Maryland. It is for this reason that **I am encouraging you to issue a favorable report on SB525: Good Cause Expungement.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Rianna Eckel  
2300 Hunter St, Baltimore MD 21218  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.justice4all.org/news/transformational-record-sealing-law-passes/>