



February 17, 2026

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

RE: Senate Bill 525 – Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Good Cause

Position: Favorable

Dear President Will Smith and Members of the Judicial Committee:

On behalf of Helping Ourselves to Transform (HOTT), I write in strong support of Senate Bill 525.

Every year, thousands of Marylanders return home from incarceration only to face permanent barriers to employment, housing, and stability because of a criminal record. With over 1.7 million Marylanders carrying a criminal history and more than 60% of formerly incarcerated individuals unemployed one year after release, expungement reform is not just a legal issue—it is an economic and public safety imperative.

Current law severely restricts access to expungement through the Unit Rule and rigid waiting-period limitations, even when individuals have demonstrated rehabilitation and stability. Senate Bill 525 restores judicial discretion by allowing courts to grant expungement upon a showing of good cause. This common-sense reform empowers judges to evaluate individual circumstances and remove unnecessary barriers to reintegration.

Stable employment and housing reduce recidivism and strengthen families and communities. Access to meaningful second chances is essential for economic mobility and public safety.

For these reasons, Helping Ourselves to Transform respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 525.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carmen R. Johnson/s/

Executive Director

Helping Ourselves to Transform (HOTT)