

HB 819/SB 464: Commission to Examine the Expungement Laws of Maryland: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Judiciary Committee & Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE HB 819/SB 464**, *Commission to Examine the Expungement Laws of Maryland*.

While framed as a study, this Commission—stacked with advocates for broader expungement (including the Public Defender, reentry groups, and individuals ineligible under existing law)—is clearly designed to push for significant expansions, potentially making more serious convictions, including felonies and certain misdemeanors, easier to erase from public records.

Maryland's expungement laws already provide meaningful second-chance opportunities for non-convictions, certain low-level misdemeanors, and specific cases (e.g., old cannabis possession) through careful, petition-based processes with judicial oversight. Creating a formal commission to recommend broader eligibility and streamlining will lead to rushed, overly permissive changes that undermine public safety, victim rights, and transparency. **Employers, schools, landlords, licensing boards, and communities rely on accessible criminal history information for informed decisions—especially in safety-sensitive roles. Automatically or more broadly sealing records could hide relevant details, reduce deterrence, and erode accountability without sufficient safeguards.**

Rather than forming a commission likely to advocate for weakening current limits, the General Assembly should focus on enforcing and refining existing laws to balance rehabilitation with protection of the public. **This bill sets the stage for dangerous expansions without demonstrated need or broad consensus.**

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against HB 819/SB 464** and oppose the creation of this commission.

Thank you for your attention to this critical public safety and criminal justice matter.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals