

Monday, February 27, 2026



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in 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, which advocates for the reform of policies and practices that adversely affect incarcerated people's successful reintegration into society. I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am testifying in **support of HB819 - Commission to Examine the Expungement Laws in Maryland.**

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, everyone, including our communities and our state, benefits.

Despite these changes, however, the expungement process remains opaque and difficult to navigate 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 past 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 readily and easily available to citizens who have left their previous mistakes behind them.

HB819 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 vote in **support** of **HB819 - Commission to Examine the Expungement Laws in Maryland.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
Baltimore, MD 21209
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore