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**HB 360**  
**Criminal Procedure – Automated Expungement**  
**(Clean Slate Act of 2026)**

**Judiciary Committee Hearing**  
**March 3, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

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To the Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

[Community Legal Services](#) (CLS) is a nonprofit legal services provider dedicated to ensuring equitable access to justice and due process of law for Maryland’s most under-represented populations. We strive to provide high quality legal representation and counsel that supports and strengthens the economic, social, health, and housing stability of our clients. We strongly support passage of HB 360.

CLS regularly conducts expungement clinics where CLS attorneys and volunteers provide free legal services to help Marylanders expunge eligible charges from their public records as they seek to get a fresh start in their lives without the lingering effects that a criminal record carries. We have seen many, many positive impacts for the clients we have helped. However, we know there are still thousands of Marylanders with charges that can be expunged. By automatically expunging eligible records for people who have completed their sentence and remained crime-free, **this bill would help Marylanders who don’t make their way to expungement clinics or legal services providers who could help them.**

Under HB 360, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Judiciary would be required to identify and automatically expunge records of non-convictions and arrests after three years, as well as eligible misdemeanor convictions after seven years. This automatic process would be ongoing, ensuring continued record relief for eligible individuals.

**Why This Legislation Matters:**

- 1. Evidence-Based Policy:** HB 360 is a sensible, data-driven approach to criminal justice reform. Research shows that individuals who have remained crime-free for five to seven years are no more likely to reoffend than those without a record.

2. **Reducing Barriers to Opportunity:** Criminal records create significant barriers to employment, housing, and education. Tens of thousands of state and federal restrictions limit opportunities for people with records, leading to negative economic and social outcomes not just for the individuals, but for the entire State.
3. **Addressing Under-utilization of Existing Expungement Laws:** Despite positive steps in expungement reform, the process remains complicated and requires that affirmative steps be taken to expunge most charges. Automating the process ensures that all eligible individuals benefit.
4. **Proven Success in Other States:** Studies from other states show that automated record-sealing laws lead to significant improvements in employment, housing, education, and overall well-being.

By implementing HB 360, Maryland can join other states in providing a second chance to individuals who have paid their debt to society and shown by the passage of time that they are no more likely to commit additional crimes than those without criminal records. This bill will not only improve lives but also strengthen Maryland families, communities, and the overall economy.

**For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 360.**

Please feel free to reach out to Jessica Quincosa, Executive Director, or Lisa Sarro, Director of Litigation & Advocacy, with any questions at [quincosa@clspgc.org](mailto:quincosa@clspgc.org), and [sarro@clspgc.org](mailto:sarro@clspgc.org), respectively.