



OUT FOR JUSTICE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 824:

Criminal Procedure - Expungement - Conviction of Distribution of Controlled Dangerous Substance

March 3rd, 2026

TO: House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Steven McDonald

Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Steven McDonald. I live in District 28 in Charles County. I'm a Master Plumber with Local 5 Plumbers and Gasfitters and a member of Out for Justice. **I write in support of House Bill 824. Also as a constituent of Vice Chair Davis, I appreciate your consideration of this bill would directly affect me as a District 28 resident.**

HB0824 amends Criminal Procedure §10-110(a)(2) to include convictions under Criminal Law §5-602(a) on the list of felony offenses eligible for expungement. Right now, §5-602(a), which covers distribution or dispensing of a controlled dangerous substance, is not consistently treated the same as similar drug offenses under the expungement statute.

Maryland law already allows expungement eligibility for certain prescription related offenses. Criminal Law §5-601 covers obtaining a controlled dangerous substance by fraud or altering a prescription. Criminal Law §8-610 covers counterfeiting a prescription. Those offenses can be expungeable. **But people like myself, charged under a different subsection, including §5-602(a), are excluded even when the conduct is tied to addiction and recovery. The difference is the statutory label, not necessarily the risk to public safety.**

My conviction came from a prescription opioid addiction that started after a serious spine injury when I was 18. I was prescribed OxyContin and was not educated about addiction risks. I developed a dependency that lasted several years and led to my only criminal conviction.

I have now been clean for 10 years. I was released in 2014. I completed a five year apprenticeship with Local 5 Plumbers and Gasfitters. I earned multiple licenses and passed my Master Plumber exam. All as the sole provider for my wife and three children.

Even with those qualifications, my record still blocks opportunity. Over 70% of Local 5 union jobs involve government contracts or sites that require background clearance. When background checks are run, I lose placements or get laid off. That affects my income and



my ability to support my family. I've also had trouble securing stable housing because of my record.

HB0824 does not guarantee expungement. It allows a person to file a petition, with a judge still reviewing the case. Waiting periods still apply and public safety is still considered. This bill simply makes someone convicted under §5-602(a) eligible to ask for relief under Criminal Procedure §10-110(a)(2).

I am not asking for special treatment. I'm asking for access to the same structured judicial review process afforded to others whose offenses are already recognized as expungeable. **I have taken responsibility, rebuilt my career, maintained long term recovery, and serve my community as a licensed tradesman. I am only asking for access to the same process others already have.**

I respectfully ask for a favorable report on House Bill 824.

Thank you for your time.