



**Testimony in Support of House Bill 131**  
**Criminal Procedure – Expungement – Adverse Actions and Removal from**  
**Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) System**

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Melissa Rothstein, Esq.

DATE: March 3, 2026

I am an expungement attorney for Out for Justice, Inc. (OFJ), and I urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 131.

OFJ seeks to engage, educate, and empower individuals impacted by the legal system to build collective power for dismantling systemic oppression and harmful policies. The organization strives to humanize marginalized communities, prevent criminalization, reduce recidivism and promote second chances and successful reintegration through advocacy, education and supportive programming. Providing the opportunity for people with a criminal conviction to clear their record after having served their sentence is a high priority for OFJ, an important component of successful long-term reentry, and a positive public safety measure.

Expungements are critical to ensuring that, after someone has done their time, they can become a fully contributing member of society. Criminal records provide insurmountable barriers to employment, housing and economic stability well past when someone has served their time. Among the reasons why expungements are so important is that they can remove these barriers. However, the expungement is meaningless if the refusal to disclose information about those charges can be a basis to deny education, a license, permit, registration or government service.

Senate Bill 315 seeks to codify the true intent of expungement law, to remove the case from a person's criminal history. While much of the focus of expungements is on document destruction, that is meaningless if the person is required to verbally disclose these events.