

**HB131 - Criminal Procedure –
Expungement – Adverse Actions and Removal from
Maryland Electronic Courts**

**HEARING BEFORE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
POSITION: FAVORABLE**

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

Shore Legal Access respectfully requests your support for HB131. HB 131 makes an important and necessary clarification in Maryland law to prevent continued exclusion and discrimination after a record has been expunged, thereby advancing fairness, economic opportunity, and equity. This bill would prevent a person’s refusal to disclose expunged information as the sole basis to deny a license, permit, registration, governmental service, or admission to an educational institution.

Expungement loses its meaning if individuals are still penalized for exercising their legal right not to disclose expunged information. HB 131 closes this loophole. It reinforces the fundamental principle that once a record is expunged, it should not continue to function as a barrier to employment, professional licensure, education, or access to public services,

Shore Legal Access (SLA) connects people on the Eastern Shore with limited financial means to legal representation and essential community resources. Each year, SLA helps over 3,0000 people in our community access the legal system when they would otherwise be shut out. Our small legal team and network of volunteer lawyers provide free legal services for eviction prevention, criminal record expungement, life and estate planning, family law, foreclosure, and consumer debt. These services help families gain financial and housing stability and give people hope and agency over their future.

Many expungement clients have shared with us their challenging journeys experiencing exclusion, discrimination, and the ongoing need to explain their past mistakes. Even charges and minor offenses create barriers to housing and jobs. The absence of clear guidance can discourage individuals from even applying for licenses, permits, or educational opportunities.

We ask for your support for HB131 to help Marylanders have a meaningful opportunity for a fresh start. For more information about our position, please feel free to reach out to Meredith Girard, Esq., Executive Director, at: mgirard@shorelegal.org, 410-690-8128.



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