

Dear **Members of the Judiciary Committee**

This testimony is being submitted in collaboration with Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore and Out for Justice. I am a resident of **District 46**. I am a workforce development professional, organizational psychology practitioner, community association board member, and proud resident of Baltimore City. **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, our communities and our state benefit.

Despite these changes, however, the expungement process remains opaque 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 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 available to citizens who have left their previous mistakes behind them.

SB464 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,

John Preston Ford

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