

Friday, February 27, 2026



## Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with Out for Justice, which advocates for the reform of policies and practices that adversely affect incarcerated people’s successful reintegration into society. I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am testifying **in support of HB169: Good Cause Expungement.**

According to the Legal Aid Justice Center, “Criminal records are more than just files stowed away in a database—they can stand in the way of renting an apartment, securing a job or a work credential, gaining admission to or paying for college, keeping custody of children, leaning on public benefits programs when needed, and voting in elections.”<sup>1</sup> Maryland has moved to broaden the availability of expungement in recent years in recognition of the fact that all of society benefits when a citizen is rehabilitated from involvement in the criminal justice system and is no longer burdened by the weight of old convictions for which they have already paid their debt to society.

Even under our broader expungement laws, however, there are many people still left behind: those whose situations are not encompassed or imagined by the current law, whom the courts have no flexibility to assist. Just as a court has the discretion to hand down a sentence, so they should have the discretion to grant an expungement if they find there is “good cause” to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.justice4all.org/news/transformational-record-sealing-law-passes/>

Not limiting the opportunities of citizens who have paid their debt to transition successfully back into the community and the economy simply makes sense for Maryland. It is for this reason that I am encouraging you to **support HB169: Good Cause Expungement**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Katherine Blaha  
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Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore