

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
Deputy Attorney General

SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Deputy Attorney General



PETER V. BERNS
General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief of Staff

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

March 3, 2026

TO: The Honorable Sandy J. Bartlett
Chair, House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Rhea Harris
Deputy Director, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 315 – Criminal Procedure - Expungement – Adverse Actions and
Removal from Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) System - **Support in
Concept**

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports in concept HB131- Criminal Procedure – Expungement – Adverse Actions and Removal from Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) System. HB131 clarifies that refusal by a person to disclose information about criminal charges that have been expunged may not be the sole reason for a unit, an official, or an employee of the State or a political subdivision of the State to deny the person’s application for a license, permit, registration, or governmental service.

HB131 also provides that refusal by a person to disclose information about criminal charges that have been expunged may not be the sole reason for an educational institution to expel or refuse to admit the person. Additionally, HB131 prohibits the MDEC system from referring to cases where possession of cannabis is the only charge and the charge was disposed of before July 1, 2023, and requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to remove all such references from MDEC.

Currently, individuals are subject to an expunged record being reviewed by the institutions from which they seek approval. HB131 will enable individuals who have been granted expungement to avoid the stigma associated with criminal records when applying for licenses, permits, and other approvals. Once a record is expunged, it should be treated as if it never occurred, and HB131 formalizes this procedure. This allows individuals who have successfully completed the

expungement process to access employment and educational opportunities without continued stigma from past charges. HB131 codifies the spirit of the already existing expungement law.

This legislation directly supports OAG's efforts to expand second chances and reduce barriers for justice-involved Marylanders. Criminal records create significant obstacles to employment, housing, education, and family reunification. For many individuals with justice-involved backgrounds, a record results in lifelong restrictions that prevent them from accessing resources necessary for building stable futures.

We appreciate the General Assembly's work on this important policy and welcome the opportunity to share our perspective. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give House Bill 131 a favorable report.

cc: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

