



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Gloria Brown Burnett, Interim Secretary*

March 3, 2026

The Honorable Sandy Bartlett, Chair  
House Judiciary Committee  
100 Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 131 - CRIMINAL PROCEDURE - EXPUNGEMENT - ADVERSE ACTIONS AND REMOVAL FROM MARYLAND ELECTRONIC COURTS (MDEC) SYSTEM - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Bartlett and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 131 (HB 131).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS works with Marylanders across the state to help them reach their full potential. A core component of DHS's strategy to address poverty is providing meaningful access to employment and training opportunities that support long-term economic mobility and family stability. This work includes delivering economic assistance and workforce development services through programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), both administered by our Family Investment Administration (FIA) and both impacted by HB 131.

HB 131 would help the Marylanders we serve by improving access to employment, education, and housing—key building blocks for long-term stability and self-sufficiency. The bill clarifies that refusing to disclose a legally expunged charge cannot be the sole basis for denying a license, government service, or school admission, and it requires certain cannabis possession cases to be removed from Maryland's electronic court systems. These changes reduce unnecessary barriers that prevent individuals from fully participating in the workforce and accessing essential services.

A criminal record—even for nonviolent or minor offenses—can significantly limit economic mobility. Individuals with criminal histories often face barriers to employment, occupational licensing, education, and housing, which in turn can suppress wages, limit career advancement, and increase economic insecurity. These barriers disproportionately affect low-income communities and can undermine

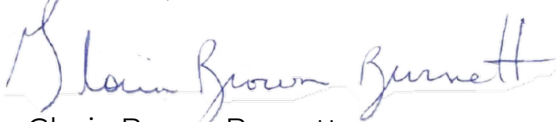
efforts to achieve stability, even when individuals are actively working to improve their circumstances.

DHS's employment and training services are designed to counter these challenges. For example, the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Program connects eligible participants to job-driven training opportunities at no cost, including pathways into high-demand industries such as construction, healthcare, and other skilled sectors. Participants also receive supportive services to help them secure and retain employment. HB 131 strengthens the effectiveness of these efforts by ensuring that individuals with expunged records are not unnecessarily hindered by past justice system involvement when seeking work, education, or licensure.

By reducing collateral consequences when criminal records are expunged, HB 131 supports DHS's broader mission to invest in families, promote economic independence, and ensure that a past mistake does not permanently limit an individual's ability to contribute to their community and support their family.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer favorable testimony with amendments for the Committee's consideration. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at [justin.hayes1@maryland.gov](mailto:justin.hayes1@maryland.gov).

In service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gloria Brown Burnett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gloria Brown Burnett  
Interim Secretary