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March 3, 2026

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

FROM: Tiffany Clark
Director, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 819 – Commission to Examine the Expungement Laws of
Maryland(Support with Amendment)

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports House Bill 819 - Commission to Examine the Expungement Laws of Maryland, with the amendment described below. HB 819 establishes a Commission charged with examining Maryland's expungement laws and processes for issues of efficiency and equity, reviewing comparable states' approaches, and developing recommendations for a streamlined and broader statutory scheme.

We appreciate the intent of this legislation to conduct a comprehensive review of Maryland's expungement laws, as this is a long overdue review. Maryland's expungement framework has developed incrementally over many years, creating a complex and at times inconsistent system that can be difficult for individuals to navigate and may leave significant gaps in eligibility and access. Criminal records create substantial barriers to employment, housing, education, and economic stability that fall disproportionately on communities that have already borne the greatest burden of contact with the justice system. A Commission that brings together practitioners, researchers, workforce and reentry organizations, victim advocates, and directly impacted individuals is well-positioned to develop meaningful and workable recommendations. However, to ensure effective implementation and alignment with the Commission's mandate, we respectfully recommend the following amendment:

- 1. Add the Attorney General, or the Attorney General's designee, as a member of the Commission.** The OAG plays a central role in Maryland's criminal justice system and

has direct experience with the legal, operational, and equity dimensions of expungement law.

he OAG is committed to supporting this Commission's important work, and we believe our participation would complement the perspectives of the other members as the Commission develops its findings and recommendations. We have shared proposed amendment language with the bill sponsor and remain available to work collaboratively with the Committee to refine this legislation.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give HB 819 a favorable report with the amendment described above.

Cc: Members of the Committee