

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 HB360 - the Clean Slate Act.**

Eligibility for criminal record expungement has expanded since the Maryland General Assembly passed the Justice Reinvestment and REDEEM Acts. However, an overwhelming majority of individuals who could have their charges expunged never petition the courts to do so because they may be unaware they are eligible for expungement or unable to navigate the daunting process in an overburdened court system.

As a result, only a tiny percentage of Marylanders whose convictions are eligible for expungement—less than 10%—actually get their records expunged within 5 years of becoming eligible.<sup>1</sup> This has lasting and potentially devastating effects for previously incarcerated people, their families, and their communities. Charges that could have been expunged instead remain on individuals' records permanently, which can dramatically harm their lives. Having a criminal record can render a Marylander unable to rent housing, obtain employment or work credentials, gain admission to college or to programs that help pay for college, keep custody of their children, access some government services, or vote in

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<sup>1</sup> C. Chien, "America's Paper Prisons: The Second Chance Gap." *Mich. L. Rev.*, 119(3).  
<https://doi.org/10.36644/mlr.119.3.america> Cited in The Clean Slate Initiative Resource Guide for Maryland Journalists,  
<https://www.cleanslateinitiative.org/maryland>

elections.<sup>2</sup> These consequences are totally avoidable, yet dramatically limit people's lives and ability to reintegrate into and participate meaningfully in society and contribute to their communities.

**HB360** would protect people from the stigma of unexpunged convictions by automating parts of the expungement process. It would require the courts to remove from public view (including the judiciary case search website) all offenses that are eligible for expungement, without the necessity of the person whose case it is filing a request for expungement. This ensures that a "clean slate" is available not just in theory, but in practice for any Marylanders who are eligible.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of HB360 - the Clean Slate Act.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
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Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore

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<sup>2</sup> The People's Law Library of Maryland, "Expungement and Changing Your Criminal Record," <https://www.peoples-law.org/expungement-and-changing-your-criminal-record>; Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform, "Expungement" <https://www.ma4jr.org/expungement/>