



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Sandy Bartlett, Chair and
Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Samira Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: March 3, 2026

RE: **HB 824 - Criminal Procedure - Expungement - Conviction of Distribution of
Controlled Dangerous Substance**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **OPPOSE HB 824**. This bill would alter Maryland's expungement statute to allow individuals convicted of distributing or dispensing a controlled dangerous substance to be eligible for expungement. This proposal expands the list of felony convictions that may be cleared from a person's record and, in doing so, risks undermining the deterrent effect of the law and public safety. Distribution and dispensing offenses involve the unlawful trafficking of dangerous drugs that are frequently linked with addiction, violence, organized criminal activity, and community harm. Making these serious felony convictions eligible for expungement could weaken accountability and reduce transparency in criminal histories that are relevant to risk assessment, law enforcement investigations, and public safety decisions.

Expungement removes a record from routine background checks and public access, which may be appropriate in limited cases for minor offenses after a long period of demonstrated rehabilitation. But, extending that benefit to drug distribution offenses shifts Maryland's expungement policy into territory that may disregard the gravity of distributing harmful substances. Convictions for distribution are not simply technical violations; they represent conduct that directly affects community safety and contributes to the ongoing public health crisis. In totality, we believe HB 824 goes too far in broadening eligibility and could compromise the integrity of Maryland's criminal justice system. For these reasons, MCPA-MSA **OPPOSE HB 824** and urge an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report.