



Testimony - HB 131, Criminal Procedure - Expungement - Adverse Actions and
Removal From Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) System

Favorable

House Judiciary Committee

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Christopher C. Cano, MPA

Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairwoman Bartlett & Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents thousands of public service workers across Maryland, including workers who serve communities most impacted by the criminal justice system. Our members believe deeply in accountability, rehabilitation, and a justice system that recognizes human growth and transformation over time. One clear tool that our system possesses to address these beliefs is expungement of charges.

House Bill 131 strengthens and clarifies Maryland's expungement laws to ensure they actually work as intended. When a record is expunged, it should no longer be used—directly or indirectly—to deny someone employment, education, licensing, or public services. This bill makes clear that refusing to disclose expunged information cannot be used as the sole basis for adverse decisions by employers, government agencies, or educational institutions.

For working people, especially those seeking stable employment in public service or higher education, this clarification is critical. Too many workers continue to face hidden penalties long after they have satisfied the law, completed expungement, or benefited from changes in state policy. That undermines both economic stability and public confidence in the justice system.

SEIU Local 500 strongly supports the bill's provisions addressing cannabis possession cases. Maryland has recognized that prior cannabis enforcement caused real and lasting harm. HB 131 ensures that cases involving only possession of cannabis that

were disposed of before July 1, 2023 are fully removed—not just from public-facing case search tools, but from the Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) system itself.

Leaving these cases accessible in backend systems defeats the purpose of expungement and allows old records to continue harming workers' futures.

Our members believe that expungement must mean a clean slate, not a legal fiction. Workers should not lose job opportunities, professional licenses, or access to education because of records the law says no longer exist. HB 131 brings Maryland closer to that standard by closing loopholes and ensuring consistent application across state systems.

SEIU Local 500 urges the committee to advance HB 131 and affirm that expungement in Maryland is real, meaningful, and enforceable by issuing a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs
SEIU Local 500