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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 824 – Criminal Procedure - Expungement - Conviction of
Distribution of Controlled Dangerous Substance (Support in Concept)

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports in concept House Bill 824 - Criminal Procedure - Expungement - Conviction of Distribution of Controlled Dangerous Substance. HB 824 expands the list of felony convictions eligible for expungement to include convictions for distributing or dispensing a controlled dangerous substance under § 5-602 of the Criminal Law Article.

This bill directly supports our efforts to advance an equitable justice system that removes barriers to stable, productive futures for Marylanders who have completed their sentences and demonstrated genuine rehabilitation. Criminal records create significant and lasting obstacles to employment, housing, education, and economic stability and these are consequences that extend far beyond the sentence itself and often fall disproportionately on individuals whose convictions reflect circumstances, including addiction and economic hardship, that have long since changed. Drug distribution convictions, even at the felony level, can reflect a wide range of conduct and personal circumstances, and treating them as a permanent bar to expungement prevents individuals who are ready to contribute fully to their communities from doing so. Expanding eligibility to include these convictions, while maintaining existing requirements and judicial discretion in the expungement process, is a meaningful step toward a more equitable and effective justice system.

We appreciate the General Assembly's work on this important policy and welcome the opportunity to share our perspective.

Cc: Members of the Committee