



HB 169 - Criminal Procedure - Expungement of Records - Good Cause
House Judiciary Committee
March 3, 2026
SUPPORT

Chair Bartlett, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 169. This bill will give the courts more flexibility to grant expungements to returning citizens if the courts deem it appropriate.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

House Bill 169 creates a clear and structured pathway for expungement by allowing individuals to petition the court for expungement of certain misdemeanor convictions after five years and certain felony convictions after seven years following the completion of their sentence, parole, or probation. By allowing the court to grant the petition upon a showing of good cause, this bill balances accountability with opportunity.

Even minor convictions can become a barrier for people applying to jobs that pay a living wage and securing safe housing. This impacts a returning citizens ability

HB 169 provides a measured approach. By setting a five- and seven-year waiting period after sentence completion, the bill ensures that individuals have had time to demonstrate rehabilitation. By allowing courts to grant expungement upon a showing of good cause, the bill recognizes that judges are best positioned to evaluate individual circumstances, including the nature of the offense, evidence of rehabilitation, and the impact of the record on employment and housing opportunities.

Expungement is not about erasing accountability. It is about removing lifelong economic penalties after a person has fulfilled their obligations to the justice system. When Marylanders can access stable employment and housing, communities are safer, families are stronger, and the state benefits from increased economic participation.

HB 169 supports economic mobility in three important ways:

1. It establishes reasonable waiting periods, ensuring individuals have demonstrated rehabilitation.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope



2. It restores judicial discretion, allowing courts to evaluate individual circumstances and determine whether expungement serves justice.
3. It reduces structural barriers to work and housing, helping returning citizens re-enter the economy as full participants.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 169.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope