



Advocates for Children and Youth improves the lives and experiences of Maryland's children and youth by advancing policies and programs across multiple issue areas that tackle racial disparities and improve outcomes to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

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**Testimony before House Judiciary Committee
In Support with Amendments
Senate Bill 833-Criminal Procedure-Expungement-Expansion- The REDEEM Act
Rachel White, Child Welfare Director, Advocates for Children and Youth
February 27, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 833-Criminal Procedure-Expungement-Expansion- The REDEEM Act. Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) supports this bill with the proposed sponsored amendments.

Passage of the REDEEM ACT is critical to improving reentry outcomes for all those formerly charged in the criminal justice system, including the ability to obtain gainful employment, work towards higher education, obtain permanent housing, and a host of other positive outcomes that help guard against recidivism. We are especially concerned with how the REDEEM ACT will drastically improve the lives of many of Maryland's youth.

Currently in Maryland, if a youth is charged as an adult for a crime and that crime is waived back down to the juvenile system, the charge remains on their record, unless a youth files for expungement on their own. It is our contention that once a judge decides that a young person can and should benefit from the services in the juvenile system, s/he deserves the full benefit of that transfer decision which includes confidentiality.

In Baltimore city specifically, youth who are transferred to the juvenile system and represented by Public Defenders receive the benefit of automatic expungement: upon a transfer decision, the attorney immediately requests expungement, and the adult charge is expunged. It can no longer be found on CaseSearch or on any other law enforcement or state agency. Outside Baltimore city, however, young people do not receive the benefit of automatic expungement and continue to be associated with a charge for which a judge decided they were not criminally culpable.

We are asking that Maryland apply the same model that is used in Baltimore City statewide to ensure that **all** youth receive the full benefits of automatic expungement. The REDEEM Act in its entirety would drastically improve rehabilitative and reentry outcomes for all of Maryland's formerly charged and formerly incarcerated, including our most vulnerable population: our youth. We support Senate Bill 833 with its sponsor-amendment, and we ask for your favorable report



