

Chairperson McEntee, Representative Messier, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I strongly oppose H8081, which allows law enforcement agencies to review expunged criminal records when issuing licenses or permits to carry a pistol or revolver. Expungement is not a mere technicality, it is a court-sanctioned recognition that a person has served their time, paid their debt to society, and has been rehabilitated. By design, an expunged record is meant to restore civil rights and allow individuals to move forward without the perpetual shadow of a past conviction.

H8081 directly undermines this purpose by creating a backdoor exception that effectively negates the relief granted through expungement. If a court has determined that a conviction should be expunged, it is because the individual has demonstrated reform and is entitled to a fresh start. Allowing state agencies to review these records for firearm licensing disregards that judgment and punishes individuals indefinitely for a crime they have already been adjudicated for and deemed rehabilitated.

Moreover, this law sets a dangerous precedent: it erodes trust in the justice system and sends a message that expungement is meaningless. Citizens who have worked to comply with the law and rebuild their lives should not be subject to additional scrutiny or denial of constitutional rights based on convictions that the courts have officially erased.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to reject H8081 in its entirety. The sanctity of expungement and the fairness of the justice system depend on preserving the full effect of a court-ordered record clearance.

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