

TESTIMONY FOR HB2698
HOUSE JUDICIARY
March 9, 2017

Mr. Chairman and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am here today to show support for HB2698. I know as a person, a parent, and a citizen I have had my fill of crime as I am sure all of you have. I have very little tolerance for excuses and sob stories because I do not subscribe to the theory that being abused, violence on television, and video games is a good reason to go out and commit crimes against innocent people and/or someone else's property not when there are very fine people who have been subjected to all of the above and never committed a crime.

I do however believe in the premise our judicial system was founded on and that is rehabilitation. We have thrown billions of dollars into various rehabilitation programs and some have worked and some have failed miserably.

Even with all of our efforts though you cannot change human nature, no matter what the crime or whether it is someone's first conviction or not we as a society set them up for failure. Landlords, insurance companies, employers, and loan companies just to mention a few are all allowed to do background checks before they have to rent an apartment to you, sell you insurance at a price you can afford, give you a job or loan you money for a car or a house. We give good lectures and offer counseling on not committing future crimes or becoming a recidivism statistic but what happens to the person fresh off parole or probation or out of prison or jail whose shattered life is now faced with not being able to find a job or even rent an apartment.

This bill cannot fix everything, nor is it expected to. It is simply drafted to give hope to one small group of people who have committed one crime but been able to be charged with multiple crimes under the law. It will allow them to apply for expungement just as if they had been charged with a single crime after three years.

It does not change the requirements for expungement or permit a person convicted of disqualifying crimes to gain expungement it simply allows a person who has been charged with multiple crimes stemming out of one incident to have the same rights to expungement as a person who committed a crime and was only charged with one crime.

Stacking of charges as this is referred to is an effective tool for prosecutors to use to obtain stronger and longer sentences and in many cases protects society for years from being victimized by repeat offenders. This is not the group who will be helped by this bill. This bill will help only those who want help. It will encourage people who have not been in trouble before their one crime not to get into trouble again, because it gives them something to look forward to.

They understand that if they fight to improve themselves and keep their noses clean in 3 years they can have a clean record and a new beginning.

There is no rehabilitation we can give, that comes with no price tag that will give you more results than hope and incentive.

I sincerely hope you will consider this bill for the value it can contribute to the rehabilitation efforts of a small group of offenders who truly wish to recapture and improve their lives.

Sincerely

Brenda Hiatt