

March 15, 2024

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Hearing Time: 9:45am

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 016

Re: HB2513 HD1, Relating to Expungement

Aloha e Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi hui, we are writing in **strong support** of HB2513 HD1, relating to expungement. This bill allows persons convicted of certain criminal violations to apply to the court for an expungement order under certain circumstances. The bill’s amendments clarify the reach of this measure and certain aspects of the process.

It is essential to recognize that individuals who have served their sentences and demonstrated a commitment to rehabilitation should not be indefinitely burdened by the stigma of past mistakes. Allowing for the expungement of certain criminal records provides these individuals with a second chance to fully reintegrate into society, pursue meaningful employment opportunities, and contribute positively to their communities.

Moreover, HB2513 HD1 represents a crucial step towards addressing the systemic inequalities and barriers faced by marginalized populations within our criminal justice system. Far too often, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by the long-term consequences of a criminal conviction, hindering their ability to access housing, education, and employment opportunities. By providing a pathway for expungement, this legislation promotes fairness, equity, and social justice for all members of our society.

It is important to note that this bill includes safeguards to ensure that expungement is granted based on a thorough review of each individual case by the court, taking into account factors such as the nature of the offense and the individual’s rehabilitation efforts.

Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth houselessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

**Please support HB2513 HD1.**

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