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Chairman Filler and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

As mayors that represent urban core communities in the state of Michigan, we have seen firsthand how an individual's criminal record can impede employment opportunities, but when given a second chance, these individuals are able to rise above their past. That is why the Urban Core Mayors are extremely grateful for your efforts to help citizens get back on their feet and reintegrated into our communities.

The Urban Core Mayors offer our full support of the effort to reform the expungement process. We will use the strength of our collective voice as mayors to advocate for making Michigan a leader in this area and set an example for other states to follow.

Currently the expungement process can be expensive and confusing, resulting in only 6.5% of eligible individuals attempting to have their record expunged. Allowing for those crimes that are eligible, to be automatically expunged after 10 years is a critical step toward putting individuals on a path for better employment and higher wages. Additionally, such a change will expand education and housing opportunities for the individuals and ultimately lower Michigan's recidivism rate.

Increasing the number of felonies and misdemeanors that can be set aside, creating a process to deal with marijuana convictions that would now be legal under the law, reducing the misdemeanor waiting period, and making some traffic offenses eligible for expungement, will undoubtedly change the lives for thousands of Michigan citizens.

We cannot emphasize enough the positive impact this issue will have on the residents we represent and the businesses we support. On behalf of the Urban Core Mayors, we extend our support for House Bills 4980-4985.

Supporting the Journey

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bobby J. Hopewell'.

Bobby J. Hopewell
Chair, Urban Core Mayors
Mayor of the City of Kalamazoo

We love where you live.

