



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: 2/15/2024
RE: HB964: Maryland Fair Chance in Housing Act

The MLLC supports HB964: Maryland Fair Chance in Housing Act, 2024

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB964.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, 94,000 Marylanders are either incarcerated, on probation or parole,¹ and more than 86,000 individuals are released annually from Maryland's prisons and jails,² with half returning to Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Prince George's County.³ Homelessness among formerly incarcerated individuals is ten times higher than that of the general population, with 5.9% of formerly incarcerated Latinos and 6% of formerly incarcerated Blacks facing housing insecurity.⁴ Data shows us that homelessness increases the hazard of recidivism by nearly 60%. The Federation of American Scientists report in their journal, *Social Innovation*, shows that unhoused individuals are 514 times more likely to be arrested and charged with crimes as compared to housed populations, and those released from prison have an average recidivism rate of 68% when unhoused.⁵ The data shows, "The cycle of crime and recidivism among unhoused persons can lead to significant challenges in receiving and maintaining permanent housing."⁶

HB964 proposes to "ban the box" on rental applications for those with a criminal history, except for those individuals listed on the sex offender registry. By removing barriers related to criminal history inquiries, promoting transparency in reasons for denial, prohibiting discriminatory advertising, and limiting the timeframe for considering criminal records, this bill will create inclusive and more equitable access to housing. Four key provisions:

¹ [Prison Policy Initiative. "Maryland profile." *Prison Policy Initiative*, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/MD.html>.](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/MD.html)

² [Sawyer, Wendy. "Since you asked: How many people are released from each state's prisons and jails every year?" *Prison Policy Initiative*, 25 August 2022, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2022/08/25/releasesbystate>](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2022/08/25/releasesbystate)

³ [Department of Public Safety and Correctional Facilities. "2022 Recidivism JCR." *Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services*, 15 November 2022, \[https://dpscsmaryland.gov/publicinfo/publications/pdfs/2022_p157_DPSCS_Recidivism%20Report.pdf\]\(https://dpscsmaryland.gov/publicinfo/publications/pdfs/2022_p157_DPSCS_Recidivism%20Report.pdf\)](https://dpscsmaryland.gov/publicinfo/publications/pdfs/2022_p157_DPSCS_Recidivism%20Report.pdf)

⁴ [Couloute, Lucius. "Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people." *Prison Policy Initiative*, 2018, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html#appendix2>](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html#appendix2)

⁵ [Rippy, Michelle. "Navigating Homelessness: The Effect of Housing Navigation Centers on Recidivism." *Federation of American Scientists*, 12 June 2023, <https://www.fedsoc.org/publications/2023/06/12/navigating-homelessness-the-effect-of-housing-navigation-centers-on-recidivism>](https://www.fedsoc.org/publications/2023/06/12/navigating-homelessness-the-effect-of-housing-navigation-centers-on-recidivism)

⁶ Ibid

- Ban the box on rental applications outside of those who are convicted sex offenders
- Provide a physical disclosure stating why an applicant's application was denied.
- Prohibit housing providers from publishing any content that discourages applicants with a criminal history from applying.
- Reduces the time frame for review of an applicant's criminal history from the past 7 to the past 3 years.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB964.