



# NAACP

Maryland  
STATE CONFERENCE

February 27, 2024

Environment and Transportation  
Maryland General Assembly  
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: HB 964 – Landlords and Prospective Tenants - Residential Leases - Criminal History Review  
(Maryland Fair Chance in Housing Act)

Members of the Committee,

I write to you today on behalf of the Maryland NAACP to express our strong support for HB 964, a critical piece of legislation aimed at promoting fair housing practices and reducing barriers to housing for individuals with criminal histories.

As Executive Director of the Maryland NAACP, I have seen firsthand the detrimental impact that discriminatory housing practices have on marginalized communities, particularly those disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system. HB 964 represents a crucial step towards rectifying these injustices and ensuring that all Marylanders have access to safe and stable housing.

By reducing the look-back period for criminal history from 7 years to 3 years in reusable tenant screening reports, HB 964 acknowledges the importance of allowing individuals with past convictions the opportunity to reintegrate into society and rebuild their lives. It recognizes that a person's past should not indefinitely dictate their future, and that everyone deserves a second chance.

Furthermore, HB 964 establishes important prohibitions and limitations on the review and consideration of a prospective tenant's criminal history. This is essential in combating the systemic discrimination that many individuals face when seeking housing due to their past involvement with the criminal justice system. No one should be unfairly denied housing based solely on their criminal history, especially when they have served their time and are striving to become productive members of their communities once again.

Additionally, the requirement for landlords to provide a detailed written explanation for any lease application denial is a crucial safeguard against arbitrary or discriminatory practices. This transparency ensures that individuals are aware of the specific reasons for their denial and can take appropriate action if they believe they have been unfairly discriminated against.

In conclusion, HB 964 is a vital piece of legislation that aligns with the Maryland NAACP's commitment to promoting equity, justice, and opportunity for all. We urge you to support this bill and help ensure that every Marylander has the chance to secure safe and stable housing, regardless of their past mistakes. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

In Service,

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