



**PREPARE**  
PREpare for PARole and REentry

March 4, 2024

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 0635  
Landlords and Prospective Tenants–Residential Leases–Criminal History Review  
(Maryland Fair Chance in Housing Act)

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

As a registered voter, a parole advocate, and a returning citizen, I support SB 0635 sponsored by Senator West. I am a staunch enthusiast of reform, redemption and second chances. So, I applaud this effort to resolve the housing conflict faced by a growing segment of MD's population.

I was released under MD's historic Juvenile Restoration Act (JuvRA) of 2021. Having entered the adult prison system at fifteen and serving over 42 consecutive years, I had no adult experience in the outside community. At 58 I began my life as a teenager venturing from home for the first time -minus the criminal record. After maintaining stable employment and amassing savings enough to offer six months rent in advance, I found myself being denied housing due to my 1979 criminal convictions. The only housing accessible to me was in rundown, high crime, urban neighborhoods.

Through my engagement in parole and reentry, I have recognized this lack of housing as a static factor contributing to recidivism. I attend reentry groups, mainly in Baltimore City. Many of the men and women I interact with do not have stable housing situations. Some bounce from one SUD transition site to another for short-term residency. Some rely on shelters. The sad reality is that most are not even employed within 90 days of their release. According to Abraham Maslow's renown 'Hierarchy of Needs', shelter is among the basic foundations of successful living. So, removing unnecessary reentry barriers for an already disenfranchised class of men and women who are making every effort to be law-abiding, productive citizens makes sense and saves cents. Therefore, I urge this honorable committee to vote favorably for SB0635.

Truly yours,

Gordon R. Pack, Jr.

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