



TESTIMONY FOR SB0635
Landlords and Prospective Tenants - Residential Leases - Criminal History
Review (Maryland Fair Chance in Housing Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator West

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0635 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Maryland has had, and still has, too many people in prison for minor offenses. Those people walk away after serving their sentence and find that they cannot rebuild their lives due to an overabundance of discrimination in getting jobs and housing.

This bill, if enacted, would help make it easier for those former offenders to get housing by:

- Precluding a landlord from requiring a prospective tenant to disclose any criminal history on a lease application, except if they are a sex offender
- Precluding a landlord from reviewing or requesting a third party to review more than the previous 3 years of any criminal history
- Precluding a landlord from publishing any statement that would reasonably discourage a tenant with criminal history to apply for a lease
- Ensuring that the landlord provide a prospective tenant with a physical document stating any reason that they would have been denied a lease

These are reasonable measures that will help those persons who are trying to restart their lives get housing.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.